

PLAY BUREAU
Federal Theatre Project
303 West 42nd. Street - New York City

8953(12)

IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE

A play by

JOHN C. MOFFITT and SINCLAIR LEWIS

From the novel

by

SINCLAIR LEWIS

ORIGINAL COPY

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WARNING

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I.

- Scene 1. A hilltop a few miles from the small city of Ft. Beulah, Vermont, early on a June afternoon.
- Scene 2. A neighborhood grocery store of Clarence Little in Ft. Beulah, an afternoon in early fall.
- Scene 3. The living-room of Doremus Jessup's home in Ft. Beulah, fifteen minutes later.
- Scene 4. Telephone switchboard of the "Little Brown Church in the Vale" in Zenith immediately following.
- Scene 5. Broadcasting Chapel of "The Little Brown Church in the Vale," simultaneous with the preceding scene.
- Scene 6. The same a few minutes later.
- Scene 7. Doremus Jessup's living-room simultaneous with the preceding scene.
- Scene 8. In front of the Ft. Beulah Hotel early on an October morning.

ACT II.

- Scene 1. Editorial Sanctum of the "Ft. Beulah Informer" three and a half months later.
- Scene 2. The President's private office in the White House two weeks later.
- Scene 3. The Editorial Sanctum a few days later.
- Scene 4. Doremus Jessup's living-room late April some weeks later.

ACT III.

- Scene 1. Doremus Jessup's living-room, May evening the following year.
- Scene 2. A cell in a Corpo concentration camp some time later.
- Scene 3. Inner room of a Corpo Immigration Post on the Canadian Border the same night.

"IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE"

PLACE: THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

TIME: VERY SOON - OR NEVER.

CHARACTERS

In the order of their appearance

DOREMUS JESSUP
LORINDA PIKE
DAVID GREENHILL
DR. FOWLER GREENHILL
MARY GREENHILL
FRANCIS TASBROUGH
HENRY VEEDER
MRS. VEEDER
CLARENCE LITTLE
SHAD LEDUE
JULIAN FALCK
MRS. WHITCOMB
EFFINGHAM SWAN
PASTOR PAUL PETER PRANG
BERZELIUS "BUZZ" WINDRIP
LEE SARASON
DAN WILGUS
PRESIDENT'S MILITARY AIDE
MR. DIMMICK
FIRST CORPO
SECOND CORPO
CORPO DOCTOR
MIKE
FIRST GUARD
SECOND GUARD
IMMIGRATION OFFICER
CORPO PRIVATE

TELEPHONE OPERATORS
PASTOR PRANG'S ASSISTANTS
PASTOR PRANG'S SECRETARY

TOWNSPEOPLE, STUDIO ATTENDANTS, DELEGATIONS FROM THE AMERICAN LEGION AND D.A.R., TRAINMEN, REPORTERS, and CORPOS.

ACT I - SCENE I

Scene: A hilltop a few miles from the small city of Ft. Beulah, Vermont.

Time: Early on a June afternoon.

The scene is a tiny plateau, a few dozen feet in circumference, of rocks and rough pasture grass, at the very top of the hill. It is accessible only from the left, on the one path up the hill. Beyond the hill there is a valley which we cannot see, though we can see another range of Vermont hills--upland clearings and slopes of maple, birch, popular and spruce--miles away beyond the valley.

AT RISE, in struggles DOREMUS JESSUP, calling back over his shoulder. DOREMUS is the editor and owner of the Ft. Beulah Daily Informer; a man of about 55, neither very tall nor very short, kindly, liberal, shrewd, competent -- a country editor who has, no doubt, worked a year or two, as a youngster, on a big-city daily. He is a widower. He does not wear plus fours or anything else smacking of the expensive country club, but he does wear old tweeds and a gay tie. He is panting a little as he lugs two large picnic baskets.

Following him is MISS LORINDA PIKE, who is about forty years old -- a spinster, probably because she has always been devoted to Doremus; for though she is something of a reformer, not unlikely to tell unwelcome truths with dry humor, she is also very attractive -- full of human juices. She also is in old tweeds, also panting; and carrying one basket, a smaller one. LORINDA has a tiny income of her own, but she is "Society and Woman's Editor" of the Informer.

Doremus

What's the matter with fishing?

Lorinda

Everything's the matter with fishing.

Doremus

There's nothing the matter with fishing!

(HE sets down the picnic basket on the hilltop, sighs contentedly and wipes his forehead.)

Lorinda

(Also setting down her basket, glancing over the view below. She then sits on the ground like a cat curling itself for sleep, but their conversation goes on without interruption.)

Fishing's a-- My what a view! Fishing is for lazy men.

Doremus

(Glances at the view, then down at her, and smiles.)

Lazy, huh! My Lord, I'm so glad to be out of the office today--forget this doggone National Convention-- And have a chance to talk with you!

Lorinda

(Drawing her picnic basket to her, peeping into it.)

A pause while she looks, then she breaks out.)

I hope I didn't forget the watermelon pickles. No, there they are! Chance to talk to me? What else do you think you do all day long in the office? Gabbling and talking and playing Knock Knock--and me trying to write about women's club activities and--

Doremus

Receipts for doughnuts.

Lorinda

Recipes! And good ones too.

Doremus

(Mildly gallant)

And you like to have me gabble to you, don't you?

Lorinda

(Shyly but betrayingly answering that gallantry.)

Well, do n' I don't. Dragging me way up here! And you said it wasn't over a mile.

Doremus

And it isn't--

(HE has comfortably squatted on the ground near her.)

Lorinda

Mile and a half if it's an inch!

Doremus

Mile! And you enjoyed every inch of it--with me!

Lorinda

I dunno's I did or not--

Doremus

Didn't you?

Lorinda

Well--maybe--sort of--

(HE inches toward her)

But you--

Lorinda (Cont'd.)

(SHE has started to say, "But you behave yourself", or some like idiotic spinster phrase, but she breaks it off and smiles at him as he pats her hand, then, with no more amateurish love-making ponders:)

Doremus

Anyway, the Corporatives can hardly nominate Buzz Windrip before midnight.

Lorinda

Let's hope they never nominate him!

Doremus

Rats! I keep asking you: What's the matter with Windrip? You're always so vague. He may not be any Dan'l Webster, but he's a real man of the people.

Lorinda

Yes, I know--I am vague. So is the whole country.

(SHE becomes serious and he listens seriously.)

Unemployment. Drought. Fear of getting dragged into another world war. Fear everywhere. Millions tired of disciplining themselves. And along comes a medicine man with the loudest voice in the whole world, and he shouts that if we'll just put ourselves in his hands-- our souls and bodies, our little trades and the education of our children--then he'll do a miracle. No! There's only one class that'll hand over responsibility--slaves!

Doremus

Well, of course, I---

(VOICES of the OTHERS can be heard.)

Lorinda

Here they come.

(THEY look down the hill, left.)

Doremus

Pretty nice grandson I got, anyway.

(As DAVID, a lively little boy of eight or ten, skips into view. DAVID has a keen, sensitive, likeable face and candid eyes. He runs at once to his grandfather.)

Lorinda

He's darling.

David

H'lo. Gee, you and Miss Pike are reg'lar mountain goats!

(In his hand DAVID has a moth....)

To DOREMUS, showing moth.)

Lookit, Gramp -- for my collection.

(DOREMUS studies it attentively.)

Doremus

Lovely. What is it?

David

(Surprised at the great man's ignorance - yet respectful.)

Why, it's a Luna moth.

(DAVID then shouts back down the path at his father, DR. FOWLER GREENHILL, a brisk, competent, and attractive surgeon of 35 to 40, and to his mother, MARY GREENHILL, gay and attractive, but an efficient young matron of about 30.)

Come on, pop! Attaboy! Come on, Mom!

(FOWLER and MARY enter. MARY pats FOWLER fondly on the back. She is in sports clothes and carries a .22 target rifle, which she lays down.)

Mary

(Fondly, but derisively)

Good work, old man.

Doremus

(Glancing down the path)

Who the dickens is that with Frank Tasbrough? Who are they?

Fowler

Patients of mine--Henry Veeder, farmer down here, and his missus. I invited 'em to join us. The other's Veeder's cousin, Clarence Little, the grocer. You know him.

Doremus

Course I know him.

Fowler

Mind their coming? Mind, Aunt Lindy?

Doremus

Course I don't.

(Together)

Lorinda

But don't you call me "Aunt Lindy", young man.

(They straggle in now:

FRANCIS TASBROUGH: Pompous textile manufacturer of 55--the richest man in town--a lifelong acquaintance of DOREMUS, however much DOREMUS may be irritated by Tasbrough's smug Toryism. TASBROUGH is the only one in the gang who is elaborately dressed, plus-fours with shrieking checked golf socks.

HENRY VEEDER: Tall gaunt farmer about 70; dignified, a patriarch; definitely neither a peasant nor a vaudeville hick,

large bony hands, white hair, no beard, though perhaps, a long white mustache. He wears overalls with a clean blue or white shirt, and a comfortable old felt hat.

MRS. VEEDER: nearly 70; a frail, fine old woman.

CLARENCE LITTLE: A smallish, insignificant, very kindly shop-keeper from town. He is carrying a big load and is followed by

SHAD LEDUE: the Jessup hired man; lumpish and surly, he combines rustic shyness with urban trickery. He is about 30 and awkwardly wears his cheap, best suit. He is carrying a small load, but as he puts it down he can be heard plainly muttering.)

Shad

Weighs a ton!

(All ten of the people on the stage: DOREMUS, LORINDA, FOWLER, MARY, DAVID, and the five just entering, are cheery, mildly excited, enjoying the idea of a picnic. All carry picnic supplies--VEEDER; a vegetable dish filled with early radishes and a couple of home-baked loaves wrapped in a dish towel. They chatter all at once as they shake hands, and begin to lay out table-cloths on the ground and to set the picnic table. Their individual remarks can scarcely be distinguished.)

Veeder

(Shaking hands with Doremus)

---pleased to---been reading The Informer for----

Mrs. Veeder

---The Doctor just said we had to come---

Tasbrough

---nice view--wonder how much this costs an acre--

Clarence

(Apropos of the contents of a basket)

---see you got the right kind of ketchup---

David

(On a tour of inspection of all the baskets)

Mmmmm! Chocolate cake! Coc'nut cake! Banana layer cake!

Fowler

---air like this grows hair on your chest---

Mary

---of course, I forgot the salt and pepper---

Lorinda

---of course, I, mmmm, forgot the napkins---

Mrs. Veeder

---oh my, I forgot the apple butter---

Shad

(Hanging around Mary at every opportunity)

---Yuh, and me, I had to turn the ice cream freezer! Why the dickens you folks don't get an electric freezer---

(DOREMUS, FOWLER, and DAVID play catch with a soft, parti-colored ball which DOREMUS takes from his pocket, crying "Hey" and "Catch!" and "Butterfingers", while MARY, though busy, smiles on them. DAVID picks up a target rifle.)

Fowler

Better not monkey with that rifle, son. Your mother's the shot in this family.

(They are soon seated, eating, and the conversation is a blur of such phrases as: Ad Lib - All)

---lovely view---

---most beautiful baked beans I ever---

---got to give me your receipt for---

---crops aren't what they ought to be---

---please pass the---

---little more of that potato salad---

---the electoral vote---

---visited her folks in White River---

---coming down the road about eighty miles an hour---

---and I said to him "Now look here---"

---what I always say is---

---never ate such cake in my life---

(Out of this blur, DOREMUS'S voice comes distinct and he calls to TASBROUGH-- while they are all still seated, happily eating and glancing at the distant hills.)

Doremus

(To Tasbrough)

Frank! Hey! Frank!

Tasbrough

Eh!

Doremus

Any more news on the radio about the convention?

Tasbrough

Not when I left. But Senator Windrip is certain to be nominated.

Lorinda

I hope not.

Tasbrough

Lorinda, you're a regular communist!

(Becoming more and more oratorical)

If you had to run a big textile mill and try to find some mechanic that knew his business---- young folks today simply won't learn. They've forgotten how to use their legs. The way they run around in automobiles, and forgotten how to use their heads! Senator Windrip doesn't aim to be any dictator. He just wants folks to be disciplined, of their own free will---and if they won't, he'll make 'em. Look at Julian Falk - the way he's perked up since he put on a Corpo uniform. How'm I going to make cotton fabrics at a decent profit if every darn share-cropper and railroad employee and mill-hand demands hours and wages and God knows what all to suit his own selfish grasping notions?

Yes sir! What we got to have is co-ordination, with one strong man as co-ordinator!

Shad

(Who has listened with approval)

Bet cher life.

Veeder

Something to that, Mr. Tasbrough. I don't think I'm such a mean boss, but these young fellows these days--why, they expect forty---fifty dollars a month and food!

Clarence

Well, personally, I don't much like this idea of any bureau co-ordinating me, but these days, when you get so many dead-beats----

Mary

Yes! I know! And just won't keep their houses clean and insist it's because they're poor----

Mrs. Veeder

My gracious, yes. You ought to see those filthy houses at Goose Creek.

David

(To Fowler)

I want to go to Goose Creek.

Fowler

Some day----some day----

(DOREMIUS rises and, looking across the valley to the distant hills, muses aloud, all heeding him.)

Doremus

(For a second he glances at TASBROUGH,
then back to the hills.)

Frank, I hate to agree with you about anything--always did!---but for once I guess your right. Young folks today---they get nothing but machine-made music and machine-made drama and machine-made travelling--and they've gotten soft. I know how Lindy thinks about our independent old pioneer forebears, but they didn't believe in a machine age, and we do, so we've just got to accept a little machine-made discipline, I guess. And that's why my paper has been kind of backing the Corpos against Walt Trowbridge and the People's Party. It's not so much that I trust Windrip as that I trust that!

(With a wide gesture he indicates the valley and the far-off hills. Then DAVID, who always listens when his grandfather speaks, has slipped over to him and DOREMUS stands with his hand on the boy's shoulder.)

Look at it! God's own free, open American country! And this is just one little New England valley. Think of all that's beyond---Arizona deserts. The Mississippi delta - richest land on earth. The Oregon forests. Do you know how big Texas is? Big as any three European countries put together. This isn't any one-horse European country that a dictator could get hold of. No sir! It's too big! Dictatorship--it can't happen here!

Clarence

No, sir!

Mr. Veeder

It sure can't! For a hundred years my folks been living on my land. Anybody tried to dictate to me, I'd just laugh and---

Doremus

Who's that coming? Well! It's Julian in that famous Corpo uniform.

Lorinda

Boy Scout uniform.

David

(Running toward JULIAN, to meet him. They are great friends.)

Julian! Julian!

(Interrupting him, in bursts JULIAN FALCK, the very likeable son of a neighbor of Doremus, a college graduate of 22 or 23. He is in CORPO UNIFORM. He rushes up the path to the hilltop, shouting)

Julian

We win! We win! Buzz Windrip's nominated!

BLACK OUT

End of Scene

ACT I - SCENE 2

It is three o'clock of an early afternoon in the neighborhood grocery store of CLARENCE LITTLE, in Fort Beulah, a small city in Vermont.

Through the glass of the door, almost totally obscured by the back of a poster, and through the front show window, partially obscured by a display of merchandise, we catch a glimpse of the red brick shops across the street, and the citizens milling about on the sidewalk. They apparently are waiting for a patriotic event of some kind. Some of the children have cheap American flags in their hands. At left is a counter bearing the weight of the cash register, and a small glass-covered case containing candies. Beyond this are shelves of canned goods.

CLARENCE LITTLE, an insignificant, dependable man, is behind the counter, chatting with MRS. WHITCOMB, a Fort Beulah housewife. MRS. WHITCOMB is storing packages of groceries into her string shopping bag.

Clarence

How about some laundry soap, Mrs. Whitcomb? We got a special on - if you take a whole case of it.

Mrs. Whitcomb

Not today, I'm afraid...I couldn't lug it to the car. They won't let you park on Main Street today...because of the parade.

Clarence

(Rather angry at missing a sale)

The parade! Buzz Windrip and his marching clubs! Keeping cars off Main Street! I'll go to the Mayor!

Mrs. Whitcomb

(Sighing)

Don't know what good it'll do you.

Clarence

People around here won't stand for monkeying with their rights! My grandfather didn't fight in the Civil War for nothin'.

Mrs. Whitcomb

(Enjoyably querulous)

Well, I don't know what the world is coming to. Young folks staying up until half-past eleven - thinkin' you're a tyrant if you tell them to get in at a decent hour. At least the Corpo Marching Clubs stand for discipline.

Clarence

I believe in freedom! Better let the kids stay up than have 'em bossed all the time!

(MRS. WHITCOMB is now opening the door.)

How's Caroline?

Mrs. Whitcomb
Oh, her arm's knittin' fine, but you know how children are---

Clarence
(Opens the glass case and puts two sticks of candy in a paper sack)
Tell her here's a present from the grocery man.

Mrs. Whitcomb
Thank you.

(Through this there is a burst of band music outside. Through the window the villagers can be seen lining the curbstone.)
My, there's the parade! You know, I sorta like music and uniforms.

Clarence
(Snorting)
So did Grandpa! But he don't now, in the churchyard.
(The music has been growing. THE CORPO GUARD, young men with uniforms and shining helmets, are now marching by. Over the heads of the spectators we see the tops of the helmets and the flags they carry - American flags and banners bearing the slogan "WINDRIP AND PROSPERITY." The CORPO GUARD begins singing to the tune of "THE CAMPBELLS ARE COMING.")

The Corpos
(Full-throated male chorus)
The Corpos are coming, hurrah, hurrah!
The Corpos are coming, hurrah, hurrah!
America's flag is nailed up on the moon--and
The Corpos are coming, hurrah, hurrah!

(Throughout the remainder of the scene, this song is repeated cheerfully and monotonously by the Marching Men, with slight variations of the third line in each chorus)

(CLARENCE comes around from behind the counter, opens the door wide, kicking a brick in front of it, so that it will stay open. With the door open, the Anti-Corpo poster is clearly seen. The poster is printed in bold red ink and reads:

A VOTE FOR BUZZ WINDRIP
IS A VOTE FOR DICTATORSHIP!
SUPPORT THE PEOPLE'S PARTY!)

The Corpos
(Continuing their song)
The Corpos are coming, hurrah, hurrah!
The Corpos are coming, hurrah, hurrah!
The Corpos are coming to capture Fort Beulah,
The Corpos are coming, hurrah, hurrah!

Clarence

(With growing dislike, begins to shout at the paraders from the doorway)

Tin soldiers! - Drug-store cowboys! - Boy Scouts! - Yah! -
Corpos! Want to be dictators!

(He repeats "DICTATORS" several times. He jumps up and down to look over the heads of the people. Noting various individual Corpo marchers, he screams belligerently, although not at all hysterically:)

Clarence

Jim Nickerson! Corperal Nickerson! Dead-beat! How about that twenty bucks you owe me! Dead-beat! Corpos! Dictators!

(He is pushed from the door, back into the shop by a high-ranking officer of the Corpos. This is EFFINGHAM SWAN, a slim, athletic man between forty and fifty years old, very suave and literate looking. It is probable that he is very competent, rather amused by life, and as cruel as a hawk.)

He is followed by four Corpo privates in uniform and helmets. They are hard-boiled, yet not too tough, young farmers and mechanics. Their entrance has been swift and quiet.)

Swan

(Addresses Clarence like a professor rebuking an unreasonable student)

Noisy little man, aren't you?

Clarence

(Scared but courageous)

Who's going to stop me?

Swan

Perhaps I should introduce myself - Commissioner Swan, Senator Windrip's representative.

(He addresses the Corpo Guards, clearly, affably)

Work on him, will you? Might as well get used to it.

(Swan starts toward door, turning to add to Corpos as the four of them start briskly toward Clarence)

And be careful of those new uniforms.

(Without another glance he swiftly crosses to the door tearing the red-lettered poster down and throwing it on the floor as he does so. He steps out into the street jauntily.

The other Corpos back Clarence to the counter. They are clumsy but menacing. Clarence is terrified. The light from the street has begun to fade.

The Corpos

(Song rises triumphantly from the throats of the marchers.)

The Corpos are coming, hurrah, hurrah!

The Corpos are coming, hurrah, hurrah!

The Corpos are coming to capture New England,

The Corpos are coming, hurrah, hurrah!

B L A C K O U T

ACT I - SCENE III.

(Through the darkness can be heard the marching feet of the CORPOS and the sound of their singing which dies down during conversation, welling up occasionally during scene.)

The Corpos

(Singing)

The Corpos are coming, hurrah, hurrah!
The Corpos are coming, hurrah, hurrah!
The Corpos will capture the vote of Chicago,
The Corpos are coming, hurrah, hurrah!

The Corpos are coming, hurrah, hurrah!
The Corpos are coming, hurrah, hurrah!
The Corpos will eat all the beans up in Boston,
The Corpos are coming, hurrah, hurrah!

(When the lights come up, it is fifteen minutes later, in the living room of Doremus Jessup.

It is one of the most attractive, if not the most pretentious, living rooms in Ft. Beulah. There is white woodwork and low-toned, old-fashioned wall paper. On the wall, between the front door and the bay window, is a tattered old "Rattlesnake" flag of the Continentals, under glass and framed.

The furniture includes some handsome old New England pieces of birch and maple. There are a couple of deep arm-chairs and two rockers, one of the rockers, placed rather prominently. It is the low old-fashioned type women use for sewing.

At right, a doorway admits to a corridor, through which one reaches the dining room, and the rear of the house, including the kitchen and the garage.

At the right also is the fine white-plaster fireplace.

On the left, there is a curving staircase to the second floor. This staircase with the wall behind it, forms the entire left side of the room. At the side of the staircase, scarcely noticeable, is a low door leading to the basement.

In the rear of the room, at right, is an arched doorway, through which one can see the front hallway and the white-panelled front door. This arch is hung with heavy portieres, which may be drawn in winter. At present they are not drawn.

The room is dominated by the cheerful bay window at back, which is set in the same wall as the hall entrance.

Though the atmosphere of the room is quite different, it should be noted that the positions of the front door and bay window are definitely reminiscent of the door and window of CLARENCE LITTLE'S store.

At the moment, a group of five people: TASBROUGH, DOREMUS, FOWLER, LORINDA, DAVID - including a small boy, are gathered at the window, watching the parade of the CORPOS.)

Tasbrough

(Looking out the window - to Doremus)

A fine-looking body of young men!

(Turning to his host)

Mighty nice of you to invite me, Doremus - best place in town to see a parade.

Doremus

Mighty glad to have you, Frank. Guess this window's the one thing I've got on a plutocrat like you.

Fowler

(Looking out the window. HE is a brisk, competent doctor of thirty-five or a little older. Gesturing at marchers, he asserts:)

This military drill may have its faults, but it does keep the young fellows off the street corners. I tell you, a doctor sees some awful results from all this loafing and unemployment.

Tasbrough

What I always say is, young fellows with any ability can find something to do, same as I did

Lorinda

(To TASBROUGH with dry, incisive emphasis)

Start washing dishes and get to be a great manufacturer like you!

Tasbrough

(With heavy modesty - to LORINDA)

Well, why not? whatever modest wealth I may have made is entirely due to my own unaided enterprise.

(The SMALL BOY, DAVID, has been looking out the window, gloating over the military spectacle. Now, with the inconsistency of childhood, his attention has wandered away. He decides to scare himself.)

David

(Making an arched claw of his right hand and sticking it in front of his face)

Oh - hh!

(HE squeals delightedly)

Big spider!

(This bit of by-play is just sufficient to spoil the effect of MR. TASBROUGH'S last remark. HE glares at DAVID.)

Fowler

(To the boy)

Quiet, son!

David

Did you know black widow spiders are poisonous?

Fowler

Yes - never saw a case though. Come--

(Goes back to the window)

This drill certainly pulls 'em together.

Lorinda

Young bullies! Always squabbling

Doremus

(To LORINDA)

Now, now, Lindy! Maybe they scrap a little, like all boys do, but you never heard of the Corpos hurting anybody.

Tasbrough

And you never will! But now you take the lazy workmen never hear of them getting pleasure out of doing an honest day's work ... No, Sir! All they holler for is higher wages and shorter hours. Labor Unions! Regular communists!

David

(Who has been sneaking in a few self-scares in silence, now runs to his father)

Can I go to the movies tonight, Daddy? I want to see "The Son of Frankenstein".

Lorinda

You're looking at Frankensteins!

(Gestures toward the window)

A whole street of 'em!

Doremus

Now, now, Lindy! Don't be a Joan of Arc till you've got a battle!

Lorinda

(Positively)

Got one now!

Doremus

The idea! Just because the Corpos Guards won't let their ~~members~~ run around all night

Fowler

And make 'em wash!

(Turning to Lorinda)

You don't object to their being tyrannized into washing their necks, do you, Aunt Lindy?

Lorinda

Don't call me Aunt Lindy! Course, the Corpos take care of their men. Baby 'em. And if Buzz Windrip gets elected, they'll baby the whole country - in prison!

Doremus

Nonsense! The people of the United States'll decide for themselves whether they want Corpoism and Efficiency, or ... the People's Party and Walt Trowbridge's oratory.

Lorinda

Tin soldiers! Soda-counter heroes! Trying to grab the Dictatorship!

(SHE is standing in the archway, her position rather reminiscent of CLARENCE LITTLE'S.)

The door opens swiftly.

All are startled by the swift silent entrance of COMMISSIONER SWAN. HE still wears his uniform. HE is followed by JULIAN FALCK, a young man dressed as a Corpo private.)

Swan

(In his silky voice)

Good afternoon!

(HE glances around the room with disturbing keenness, scrutinizing each person in turn, much as he looked at CLARENCE LITTLE. There is a split moment of uncomfortable silence.)

David

(Making a spider again with arched hand)

Oooh!

(He shrieks enjoyably)

(Everyone laughs except SWAN, who smiles agreeably)

Julian

(He is really a nice boy - a neighbor)

Mister Jessup! This is Commissioner Swan from Boston, our new Corpo party manager for Vermont.

(SWAN favors them with the snappiest salute ever performed in this living-room. DAVID runs at once to JULIAN.)

Swan

(Affably joking - to Julian)

And your cruel boss, young-fella-me-lad!

Julian

(Beaming at such flattering attention)

That's right, sir!

(To DOREMUS)

You were the first person in town the Commissioner wanter to meet, Mister Jessup.

Tasbrough

(Stirs importantly and irritably)

Mmmmm!

Doremus

(Gratified, though not too much so, advances to
shake hands with SWAN)

Have a chair. Sit down, Julian.

(The COMMISSIONER seats himself. JULIAN is
much too military - he retires to the back
of the room, where he stands at attention)

We've been more or less supporting the Corpos.

Swan

(Pleasantly)

No one knows it better than I! It might surprise you to know we read
your editorials at Boston headquarters.(There is a tiny and almost embarrassing pause,
natural when a stranger meets a group who know
one another intimately)

Doremus

(Looking at JULIAN)

Do sit down, Julian.

Swan

(Slightly military)

At rest, Falck!

(JULIAN goes over and sits on the bottom step
of the stairway. HE listens brightly and
intently to all that follows.)

Doremus

This is Miss Lorinda Pike -- she edits my Society Page.

(LORINDA and SWAN bow)

David

(Bored by all this adult stupidity and attracted
by the uniform, runs up to SWAN)

Are you a Corpo?

Swan

I try to be, Captain!

David

(Swaggering, a little contemptuous of such
ignorance - yet not tough)

Aw, I'm not a Captain! I'm Dan'l Boone.

Swan

(Saluting him, with pretended awe)

Sorry, Mr. Boone.

David

I'm going to explore Brazil.

Doremus

Dan'l Boone never explored Brazil.

David

He's going to.

Doremus

(To DAVID)

Skip out and play, general. Parade is about over.

David

Aw, I want to go to the movies!

Fowler

(Parentally perempt)

Beat it!

David

Okay!

(HE slowly filters out and exits through the front door during the following)

Lorinda

(Mimics, disgustedly)

"Okay!" - - - Toy machine guns! At Davey's age! There's your Corpo influence.

Swan

(More affable than ever - to LORINDA)

Better than dolls, Ma'm!

Doremus

(To LORINDA)

Don't you worry about that boy! He'll be the scholar I wanted to be.

(To SWAN indicating FOWLER.)

Dr. Greenhill, my son-in-law, Commissioner - living with me here since my wife passed away.

(SWAN bows to FOWLER)

Fowler

Certainly is a pleasure to know you, Commissioner. They offered me the medical officership of the Corpo unit here - but we're building a new wing on the hospital

Doremus

And this is Mr. Tasbrough...

(He indicates TASBROUGH)

Our chief manufacturer.

Tasbrough

(Ever since SWAN came in, HE has become increasingly irritated at being ignored. HE now shakes hands with SWAN patronizingly. His voice a perfect organ-note of pomposity - while SWAN rapidly becomes icy.)

I suppose you've already dropped in at my little textile mill, Commissioner. Too bad I was away.

Swan

No, sorry... Haven't had the chance yet.

Tasbrough

Why, it's the biggest single industry in the county! And I've been ordering - well, you might say urging - the hands to vote Corpo.

Swan

Splendid!

Tasbrough

I understood you were coming

Swan

Well, here I am, my dear fellow!

Tasbrough

And I was all ready for you. In fact ...

(Ceremoniously HE takes fat wallet from pocket, elaborately opens it, takes out signed check and hands it to SWAN as though HE were conferring royal favor.)

I had my party contribution all ready. Here it is, my boy!

(Looks triumphantly at SWAN, then one after another at the others in the room)

One thousand bucks! One - thousand - bright - gold - dollars !

(SWAN contemptuously hands check back to TASBROUGH who takes it incredulously.)

Swan

Error, I'm afraid, sir! I'd understood your quota was five thousand.

Tasbrough

(Aghast)

Five thou

Swan

So I think we'd rather not have you as a contributor at all. We'd thought of you as one of the inner council, but we don't care for any one who isn't passionate about our idea

Tasbrough

(Huffily, and feeling that he is being lordly and independent of this mere politician)

All right, sir, just as you feel about it.

Swan

(Glacial and smiling)

That's just the way we feel about it.

Tasbrough

(Deflated)

Well - well

(Trying to get his spirits back up)

I can't fool around any longer ... On the job.

(Waving an inane farewell)

Tasbrough (Cont'd.)

Be good, all of you.

(HE glares at SWAN and stalks out to front hall, takes light top-coat and derby hat and exits... While HE is doing so MARY GREENHILL is coming lightly, quickly, cheerfully down the stairs. SHE is in a smart tweed suit and cloche hat... All eyes turn on HER)

Fowler

(To SWAN)

My wife, Commissioner. She's the best Corpo in this whole neck of the woods. Great believer in training.

Mary

(Shaking hands very briskly with SWAN)

Indeed I am ... I hope David'll grow up to be a Corpo.

(LORINDA doesn't think much of this sentiment.

SHE walks over and crouches disapprovingly in the sewing chair. MARY turns to DOREMUS)

Dad, where is my wild Indian?

Doremus

Out playing ... he's all right.

Mary

(To everybody)

Wasn't it a nice parade! I saw it from upstairs.

(Smiling on SWAN)

So sorry ... must dash down to the grocery before it closes ... ~~the~~ maid would have to have the afternoon off to see the parade! Honestly, I don't know what's come over servants. No gratitude! And the wages they demand!

Lorinda and Doremus

(Speaking at the same time; fond of MARY but irritated and twangy)

Lorinda

Well, they deserve all the wages they get, and ...

Doremus

If you had to wash the dishes for a lot of ...

Mary

(Cheerfully - not offensively)

All right, you Abraham Lincolns! Jessup and Pike, the friends of the forgotten man ...

Swan

(To MARY)

That's our show. The League of Forgotten Men will declare for Buzz Windrip!

Mary

I'll leave you to fight it out. Bye! Good-bye, Commissioner.

(Waving a cheerful arm, she heads for secondary door down right, calling to FOWLER)

Mary (Cont'd.)

I'll take the flivver, Fowler. Afraid to leave it for Reds like
Aunt Lindy ...

Lorinda

Don't call me Aunt Lindy!

Mary

(As she goes)

Okay ... Aunt Lindy!

Lorinda

(Glaring at the door where MARY has exited)
Black magic, that's what it is!

Doremus

(He likes to talk politics)

So the League of Forgotten Men will support Windrip, you think ...

Swan

(Quickly)

It's certain!

(A little more guardedly)

I mean ... I don't see how the League and Pastor Prang can fail to declare for Windrip.

(He warms to his topic)

It must mean something when Windrip makes his first pilgrimage to the Pastor's Little Brown Church in the Vale, and they broadcast together. Who knows? This afternoon may be as historic as the Battle of Lexington! You must all listen in - especially,

(To LORINDA)

you, ma'm; so you'll get a better idea of Senator Windrip's real passion for justice.

Lorinda

(Sadly - not perkily, as before)

I will. If they can convince me, all right.

(Sadly)

Swan

(Very impressively)

Sometimes Buzz jests ... but he jests so that his heart will not break. Some of his followers may be humble ...

(HE is interrupted by the sudden entrance through the low basement door under the stairs of SHAD LEDUE. He wears overalls, dirty and ragged khaki shirt, and a cloth cap with celluloid visor, which he never removes in the house.

HE grunts and kicks as HE turns sidewise to get through the narrow door, with the armful of firewood which HE is carrying. HE comes into the room pleasurable ~~ign~~ ignoring the others, who watch him as HE dumps the small logs with a bang on the hearth, and instantly starts back toward basement door.

Doremus

Shad! Don't be so noisy!

Shad
(Mumbling - surly - defiant)
Aw ... I can't help it!

Swan
(Stops him sharply)
You! Ever in the army?

Shad
No'sr.

Swan
Military training?

Shad
Militia, sir.
(HE makes two syllables out of it - Lishsir)

Swan
What rank?

Shad
Corporal, sir.

Swan
You the fellow that organized the Goose Creek Gang?

Shad
Yessir.

Swan
All right.

(HE nods dismissal; SHAD salutes and exits through
basement door. To DOREMUS)
Husky hired man you've got there.

Doremus
Yes ... leetle cocky though. Feels superior to domestic work. We
only took him on because he begged us - - made a God-awful failure
of a turkey farm.

Fowler
Yes, what Shad needs

Swan
Shad?

Fowler
Shad Ledue ... that's his name ... All he needs is a slight opera-
tion on his head ... amputation! I should say - a caputectomy.

Doremus
I ought to fire him ... but I been doing kind of a little social
experiment - training him to be pretty near as polite as the
average Neanderthal man.

Fowler

(Getting up)

Well, you failed! Well, I certainly hate to miss that broadcast - but I'm due at the hospital. So long.

(To SWAN)

Delighted to meet you, Commissioner! Mighty glad the Corpos sent us a gentleman.

(Starts to go. Then stops himself thoughtfully)

Oh, say - can I give you a lift?

Swan

(To FOWLER, indicating JULIAN)

No thanks ... young Falck has his little car.

(Exit FOWLER at dining-room door down right,
as SWAN continues to DOREMUS)

And we must be going.

Doremus

(Hospitably protests)

Oh, stay and listen to the broadcast.

Swan

Thanks so much, but I must listen to it with my staff.

(To LORINDA)

It might surprise you to see the inspiration we get from the Chief. Windrip's the born leader - and that's what we need - Oh, desperately. The people are soft, and think of nothing but what they call "freedom". Freedom to shoot off their mouths!

Lorinda

Freedom to shoot off your mouth is an American tradition!

Swan

That's not your ancestors' tradition! Not the tradition of your father, the old minister!

Lorinda

(Amazed)

How did you know my father was a minister?

(SWAN smiles; DOREMUS chuckles and winks at JULIAN - they love LORINDA but don't mind seeing her taken down)

Swan

If this nation is not regalvanized into the spirit of '76, any foreign power could walk in and subject every one of us to slavery!

Lorinda

We did a little subjecting ourselves, in Nicaragua!

Swan

Nicaragua is a case in point! The Corpos intend to have scientific treaties with Central and South America

Lorinda

Oh, Corpos intend everything! They tell the industrialists they'll stop all the strikes. They tell the workers, unions will be sacred. They tell the well-to-do they'll lower taxes. They tell the poor they're to have twenty-five hundred a year when they're sixty.

Doremus

Now, now, Lindy, that's unfair - downright unsporting in a political campaign to remember all the political speeches and see what they add up to.

Lorinda

It is not! Mr. Commissioner! Can you reconcile all your "On the other hand" business?

Swan

(Quietly - firmly - pleasantly)

Yes! Hitherto, the American Government has been utterly wasteful - that wishy-washy monstrosity called a "liberal democracy". It must stop! We don't want any more congressmen pretending to represent the people while they're only out for their own glory. We're going to make Congress responsible to one man.

(Rolling on)

Call him "dictator", if you insist! Afraid of a word?

Lorinda

I am - of that word!

Doremus

Lots of people being killed by it, all over the world.

Swan

(More quietly)

Death may be better than slavery, to Europe.

(Raises an arm in farewell)

(JULIAN has stood up, moved to door.

SWAN makes quick exit, followed
by JULIAN.

LORINDA and DOREMUS, now left alone,
stare after them.)

Lorinda

Well, upon my word!

Doremus

No! He's a nice fellow. He doesn't believe all this one-man stuff.

Lorinda

Maybe ... Well, I must go, too.

(She goes to window, glances out at October-faded
trees and muses:)

Leaves all faded. Fall! It makes me feel old. No more picnics for us this year, Doremus.

Doremus

(Ambling over beside her)

Nope. Guess not. Well, plenty more picnics next year.

Lorinda

Who knows where we'll be, next year? Will Spring ever come again?

(JULIAN pops in - goes no farther than doorway.)

Julian

Sorry to bother you. A note. The Commissioner just scribbled it in the car.

(DOREMUS takes note, starts to open it)

It's not for you, Mr. Jessup ...it's for SHAD. Bye!

(Exit JULIAN)

Doremus

(Closing the front door)

Well! Shad's coming up in the world! Getting messages by official courier!

(HE crosses to basement door, under the stairs, opens it and shouts)

Shad! Shad!

Shad's Voice

(Offstage - very surly)

Wha'd yuh want?

Doremus

Letter for you.

(Tosses note in and closes door)

Lorinda

Shad is just the kind that will be bossing all of us, if the Corpos win.

Doremus

Any time Shad can boss me

(MARY, abruptly bolts in through door from dining-room and garage. SHE is greatly agitated. DOREMUS is alarmed.

Mary!

(HE rushes to MARY, smoothes her shoulder. She speaks with some difficulty)

Mary

(Re-assuring herself)

I'm ... all right now ... safe home ... Where is Davey?

Doremus

Outside, playing around.

(Comforting)

What is it?

Mary

(Shuddering)

Something horrible! I went to Clarence Little's grocery ... He's been killed! ... An hour ago. The pavement was all - smearly. I talked to Charley Betts ... your reporter. He

(Lowering her voice)

said maybe the Corpos had done it!

Doremus

Good Lord! I'll call the office.

(HE goes to telephone)

421 ... 'Lo. Informer? Mr. Jessup speaking. Lemme speak to Charley ... 'Lo. Charley, what about this Clarence Little business?

Doremus (Cont'd.)

(HE continues speaking and listening, but for a time we do not catch just what he says. Mean-time, MARY goes to front door, calls out)

Mary

Davey! Daaaaaavey!

(DAVID appears in door)

I want you to come in now, dear.

David

Aw, gee, we're just playing Corpos and robbers.

Mary

I want you to come in! It ... There's so many strangers in town today. Come, now! I'll tell you a story.

(DAVID grumbling "Aw, thunder! Aw, gee" reluctantly follows her in and up-stairs. She keeps looking down. She is deadly frightened and pushes the boy ahead of her, as though she felt herself between him and the outer world. Her slow, irresolute progress up-stairs is in contrast to her recent blithe descent. DAVID and MARY disappear as we hear DOREMUS at the telephone.)

Doremus

(On the telephone)

No, don't wire it ... telephone it in to the Associated Press.
Hustle!

(Hangs up receiver)

(To LORINDA)

Poor Clarence ... got killed, all right. Charley's not sure the Corpos did it ... There was a row in the store. Anyway, it's big news! First killing, anywhere in the country, in this election.

Lorinda

(Clutching at his arm)

You must keep it the last killing! Listen! May be a crazy idea but... Senator Windrip must be in Zenith right now, at the Little Brown Church ... ready to broadcast. Maybe he is half way decent, like that man Swan claimed. You've simply got to telephone Windrip ... Get him to say something on the radio, so even if it was his gang that killed Clarence, they'll never do it again.

Doremus

Preposterous!

Lorinda

I don't care! It's your duty happened in your town. You're the editor.

Doremus

In the first place, I never could get him - every blame politician in Zenith'll be on his tail. And if I could, he'd think it was sheer nerve. Might as well call the King of England!

Lorinda

(Dropping into a chair, discouraged, a little bitter)
Oh, I suppose so ... you're like the rest ... you think I'm just a
cranky old maid, sticking her nose into everybody's business. The
town crank! They laugh at me; now, I suppose, you will!

Doremus

(Showing more affection for her than before)
I will not! And nobody else does. Whole town knows you're a saint!
If you want Buzz Windrip called, he gets called!

(HE picks up the telephone. Sharply to operator)
Toll Line ... Toll Line? Ft. Beulah, 103, speaking. Person to
person call. I want to speak personally to Senator Windrip ...
W-I-N-D-R-I-P, or to his secretary, at the Little Brown Church in the
Vale, Zenith ... they must have some kind of a 'phone there

BLACK OUT

ACT I - SCENE 4INTERSCENE:

Although this scene is played entirely in darkness it is the switch-board of "THE LITTLE BROWN CHURCH IN THE VALE".

The clicking of the connections can be heard and the continuous voices of some half dozen operators. They speak in the slightly professional voice of all telephone operators.

Operators

Lil Brown Church-in-a Vayul.

" " " " "

" " " " " , Yes, New York

" " " " " , Yes, Miami, I'll connect you with his secretary.....Secretary two, Miami calling.....Lil Brown Church-in-a Vayul.....Secretary Nine, Seattle calling.....

(Less Mechanically with more personal interest)

Yes, Topeka...Oh, yes, Topeka....I'll get you his secretary.

(In reverential awe)

Yes, San Simeon...Right away-ee!

Lil Brown Church-in-a Vayul, Fort Beulah, Vermont? Yes, Ft. Beulah, I'll see if I can connect you with Pastor Prang's own private secretary. He'll try to get the message through to Senator Windrip....Secretary Eight, Ft. Beulah calling.... I dunno, just somebody in Vermont.....

End of Interscene

ACT I - SCENE 5

The BROADCASTING CHAPEL of "THE LITTLE BROWN CHURCH IN THE VALE".

Time: Simultaneous with preceding scene.

The room is so dim that we can see just one figure, in a spot light - that figure is the celebrated radio pulpiteer and clerical politician, PASTOR PAUL PETER PRANG - eloquent, sincere, yet so hungry for publicity and power that he constantly blindfolds his own sincerity. He is in gray clerical clothes, with reversed collar, but his coat is off. We do not see the two men to whom he speaks.

Prang

Janson?

Voice off stage

Yes sir!

Prang

Right side of the mike, about two feet upstage, the Spanish Episcopal throne...not the one I bought in France, but the Spanish one.

Voice off stage

Check!

(A man SECRETARY enters.)

Secretary

(Very deferentially)

Senator Windrip and his secretary, Mr. Sarason, have just arrived, Pastor.

Prang

(Silences him with a deliberate, seraphic gesture)

One moment!

(His face raised to the loft)

Light man!

(Spot follows him as he steps up to microphone on an ecclesiastically carved desk.)

Come up on your ambers and dim your blues.

Second Voice (off-stage)

(Drawing)

O.K. Pastor.

(Light becomes tenderly dim-cathedral)

Prang

That's better....Little more amber.

Secretary

(Like a little child)
But who's going to see it, Pastor?

Prang

(Sententiously)
God sees it!

B L A C K O U T

ACT I - SCENE 6

The lights come up to reveal three men, grouped like the fates, weaving the destiny of America.

They are in the same ecclesiastical broadcasting chamber.

PRANG, having made his radio introduction of WINDRIP, sits on his episcopal throne, coat on, hands reverently folded on his stomach, beside the microphone desk. The throne cost a great deal in a prerevolution Madrid antique shop, but that doesn't keep it from being a fake.

On the other side of the room sits LEE SARASON (whom we shall see again). He is, to BUZZ, the most important man in the world. He is at once BUZZ' man of all dirty work, efficient secretary, bitter jester, and mentor. BUZZ sees him as a most superior person and can never get over the miracle that he, the village boy that made good, should have for stooge a man who is technically a gentleman-and scholar-a man who views the death of their enemies with cold equanimity. BUZZ, himself, in a blundering way, would rather have everybody like him-provided only that he should be their boss. He wants LEE to amuse him with his acid comments, but he also worries lest LEE laugh at him.

LEE is a slender, quiet, tightlipped man; very pale, slender, with killer eyes, his clothes even more expensive than BUZZ' but always restrained. He is an excellent linguist, rather a good writer and historian, a fine pianist, but his greatest passion is modern painting. In his heartlessness, his entirely vicious superiority, he is the real thing where EFFINGHAM SWAN is always pretentious and rather bogus. His favorite poet is Shelley, but he is as exact about financial accounts and about punctuality as a head bookkeeper.

As the lights come on, to reveal the three men, BUZZ is already in the midst of his great national hook-up broadcast.

At the microphone, roaring discord on earth and defiance to mankind, is BUZZ WINDRIP (SENATOR BERZELIUS WINDRIP) CORPORATIVE PARTY CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

BUZZ is a stalky, energetic man of between forty-five and fifty; a perky small-town lawyer of vitality, brass, and imagination. He is dressed flashily (we see only his head, neck, shoulders) though expensively. His voice is deep and be-spelling as an organ note, even when he is being cheaply patriotic.

He sits at the desk between PASTOR PRANG and LEE SARASON.

Buzz

(He is whooping it up into the microphone as the lights go on) ...and the kid-glove element in the People's Party continually return to their favorite charge against me--that I am a red-neck, a mucker, -- just a Common Man! Since they know that I have won every important law case I have ever fought, including some before those high and mighty billygoats, the Justices of the Supreme Court, they claim that when he appears before some august Tribunal, Buzz Windrip doesn't wear a dress suit with a velvet collar, but just plain, ordinary blue jeans. Well--they're right! A plain man -- darn near as plain and common as Abe Lincoln or that old Virginia hick farmer, George Washington, that when he chased the red-coats from the land, half of his troops did it, by golly, with a pitch-fork!

(ATTENDANT tiptoes across from a door unseen in the gloom beyond the circle of light. He hands SARASON a pile of memos, which SARASON glances through as BUZZ talks on.)

Yes sir! If in my hands be placed the sacred obligations of the Presidency, I shan't be able to conduct it one bit better than such poor white trash as Washington, Lincoln, Andy Jackson, and Warren Gamaliel Harding!

(SARASON runs through the pile of memos, flipping off one on the floor all but one. This he reads a second time, and by his facial expression we see that the news in it is disturbing. During the following BUZZ is steadily talking on all the while, never hesitating. SARASON hands him this one note. BUZZ pantomimes that he is not to be bothered; SARASON that BUZZ must give his attention to this one thing. SARASON is attentive but not obsequious. Still talking just as before, BUZZ does read the note, then pantomimes extreme annoyance to SARASON, and finally in his agitation, starts to pull out of his inside pocket a pint of Bourbon. SARASON indicates PRANG, and indicates that the good pastor would be displeased by BUZZ' taking a drink. BUZZ pushes the bottle out of sight. Suddenly he has a bright idea and pantomimes to SARASON, who goes back to his chair and listens to him anxiously, that SARASON is to watch and see--All during the above, he had been heartily talking on, apparently unruffled.)

---And cross my heart, as we used to say when I was a little, one-gallus shaver among the corn-fields, I have not bribed these People's Party sissies to elect me by their high-brow revelation of my hickishness. And so this matter of humble worth brings me to the question of my foreign policy. And have I got one, my enemies ask. You bet your life! If there's one thing that I haven't got anything but, it's a clear, ringing, traditional, American slant on foreign policies. America is the one and only country in the world of which it can be said that She has never entered an unjust or unnecessary war, and never lost one. Right in the beginning, when our glorious forbears first landed here, the treacherous

Redskins attacked our humble settlements, and we had to drive 'em off. So now we ought to go forth into the great councils of state, not asking for anything but tellin' 'em, and meanwhile I intend to build up adequate defense--and the least America can contemplate with her peculiar mission in the world, is an army equal to any other two armies in the world, and----

B L A C K O U T

ACT I - SCENE 7

The broadcast is still going strong. We see it being received via the handsome radio in the house of DOREMUS JESSUP.

DOREMUS and LORINDA are listening with excited anticipation. But LORINDA is having difficulty restraining her disapproval.

The Radio

(BUZZ' voice continuing)

...and that is, we must have a great, big spring house-cleaning in our diplomatic corps and replace all these denatured cookie-pushers by a bunch of real he-Americans with hair on their chests ...

Lorinda)

Hair on their brains!)

) Simultaneous with

Doremus) following

Hush!)

Radio

(BUZZ' voice)

But all my policies, domestic and foreign, are based on just one principle - to scientifically help the downtrodden become the equals of any Shakespeare or any money-wallowing international Jewish banker that ever lived! And I would end here - with "Farewell my neighbors."

Lorinda

Neighbor to a rattle-snake!

Radio

...except for a memorandum that has just been handed to me and which I have had to ponder even while I have been talking to you. To my tragic horror, I find that not one hour ago - you will read of it in your papers tomorrow but I'm going to tell the myriad millions of you before then - a most unfortunate occurrence occurred in the beautiful little city of Ft. Beulah, Vermont.....

(LORINDA and DOREMUS listen closer. This is what they are waiting for.)

A very fine substantial merchant of that city was fatally injured in a scuffle, and my enemies are trying to place the blame upon the Corpos. I have secret information of what did happen, and it entirely exonerates the Corpos. But if I did not know the truth, if any Corpo in any way were to blame, I would cast him forth, if it cost me my last follower, for if any harm be done unto the least of these, verily it was done unto ----

(LORINDA sharply turns off the radio though DOREMUS protests.

Doremus

Hey! I want to hear the rest!

Lorinda

(As he goes to the radio)
Leave it off!

(Ring of electric bell.)

Doremus

He certainly did all he could - - - - -
(DOREMUS starts for door.)

Lorinda

All he's going to do - - - - -

(DOREMUS opens the door. JULIAN bounces in.)

Doremus

Back again! Got another love-letter from Shad?

Julian

(Respectful, very friendly)
No, sir, it's for you, this time...but it's from Commissioner Swan.

(He hands over a large envelope, which doremus opens, taking out large ornate parchment, with seal. Clipped to this document is a note, which DOREMUS reads aloud.)

Doremus

(Reading)

Dear Mr. Jessup:

We shall be honored if you will accept the enclosed appointment as Honorary Corporative Sub-Commissioner for Beulah County. There are no duties involved except your expression of approval for what we are endeavoring to do. I beg to remain, sir, your humble servant, E. Swan.

(Holds up parchment scroll)

Hm! Little too fancy for me.

Lorinda

(Scornfully)

Fancy! Looks like the Sons and Daughters of I Will Arise. But it's nothing so funny. It's meant as a future bribe.

(Very pointedly)

In case there should be any more trouble, like the murder of Clarence Little - - - - -

Doremus

We don't know it was murder...

Julian

(Eagerly explaining)

It was an accident. The Commissioner was all broken up about it. He investigated right away. You know Mr. Little did drink too much...
(Diffidently. He hates to speak out of turn.)

Julian (cont'd)

What happened was; he got to scuffling with some fellows, and one of them pushed him - he fell down and hit his head against the counter.

(Emphatically)

That's what happened!

Doremus

(To LORINDA, holding up the large parchment)

Prob'ly was! Lindy, I ought to accept this appointment. If some of the younger element in the Corpos tend to be rowdy, all the more reason why I should take part...I can be a good influence.

Lorinda

You can only influence a machine gun from one end of it!

Doremus

Quit making the Corpos out a bunch of Frankensteins. Isn't Julian here one - and we've known him since he was

(Holds hand out vertically to indicate about a foot) so high.

Lorinda

(Looking at Julian rather sadly)

That's what worries me.

(Turning on Julian)

I'm astonished! A nice boy, like you, running around playing tin soldier - and after getting such a nice Dartmouth College education! Why don't you get yourself a good, sweet, wholesome girl...

Julian

(Interrupting her. He has lost his habitual cheerfulness.

He speaks almost savagely.)

A girl! As though I wouldn't give anything for one!

Lorinda

(Perplexed)

But, Julian...

Julian

(Speaks rapidly - this has been on his mind for a long time)

As though any young man, without a rich father, can afford to even blow a girl to a Coca Cola these days!

(Almost sneering)

They told me if I did well in college, there'd be a good job waiting for me!

(Growling)

Well, I did go to college! I got honors! And they were the last thing I got. I've begged for a job - any kind of a job -

Lorinda

(Puzzling)

You did work, Julian.

Julian

(Impressively)

I've worked exactly four months during the past year - and that's better than most of my classmates.

(Expostulating)

Youth today isn't asking for a cinch or looking for glory! Youth is yelling for a job! And the Corpos will find one for me! They'll tell me what to do, and they'll feed me! They'll shake off this bungling "Democracy"...

(Scornful quotation)

and order things so that we'll get a living.

(To Lorinda)

When that happens - I'll get a sweet wholesome girl - and stop playing Romeo to a vacant balcony. We're not bandits! We're realists. We're through sitting around being Parlor Pinks. We're working together - behind Buzz Windrip, the Man on Horseback...

(SHAD LEDUE suddenly appears, noisily kicking the basement door open. He tramps into the room, wearing his cheap best suit, his flashy green hat on the back of his head at an insolent angle, and carries a straw or imitation-leather suitcase.)

Shad

(Stamping up to DOREMUS)

I want my time. I'm quitting.

Doremus

Well, I don't entirely dislike the notion...But it's a little inconvenient. You said you longed to stay with us all winter -

Shad

Hell with that. I want my time.

Julian

(Raging at Shad)

You chuck it -

Shad

(To Doremus insolently)

Not goin' to try and hold out on my dough - are you?

Doremus

(Irritably taking out his wallet and counting bills out to Shad, who has set suitcase down on the floor)

Certainly not! It's a pleasure.

Shad

(Roughly to Julian, pointing down to suitcase)

Take that out to the bus stop!

Julian

(It must be remembered that he views himself as a young gentleman of the town thus addressed by a roughneck. He doubles up his fist, though Shad is much stronger, and snarls at him!)

Of all the gall...Have I got to...

Shad

Got to do a lot of things!

(Smirks and becomes very fancy)

Do my eyes deceiveth me, or artest thou a Corpo private?

Julian

What has that...

Shad

'Member the little billy-ducks you brought me from Swan?
He's made me a Sergeant of Corpos, on full time!

(Very authoritative)

Take that grip out!

(He points again to suitcase. With some dumb-shew of re-
sistance, still furious, JULIAN picks up the suitcase and
sullenly trudges out. SHAD follows him out after a sar-
donic farewell to the other two.)G'by, Papa! So long, Aunt Lindy! Now you two baddies keep out of
the bushes.

(Exits.

DOREMUS and LORINDA, speechless, shaking their heads, move
to window to look out on the departing SHAD and JULIAN.
Exasperated silence, till DOREMUS bursts out)

Doremus

Well, say it!C U R T A I N

ACT I - SCENE 8

TIME: A few weeks later : 6. A.M.

SCENE: Second story balcony of Ft. Beulah Hotel. It is hung with posters such as "WELCOME TO WINDRIP" and "WE PLAY NO FAVORITES BUT GLAD TO SEE YOU, SIR". The street in front is close packed with people come to see BUZZ, now campaigning for the Presidency. There are Corpo batallions, American Legion Post in uniform, respectable-looking females with sashes lettered "D.A.R.", ununiformed merchants, farmers, mechanics, with their wives and --especially--their children, all waving small American flags.

In the crowd, not together, are seen DOREMUS (taking notes), LORINDA; MARY, DAVID, TASBROUGH, THE VEEDERS, MRS. WHITCOMB, SHAD, (not yet in uniform). FOWLER is not in sight.

The crowd is immensely enthusiastic. There are a hundred broken cries, all expressive of admiration for BUZZ or a desire that he come out and speak to them. The Corpos, led by one of their number, cheer:

"HIP, HIP, HOORAWWWWWWW"
 "HIP, HIP, HOORAWWWWWWW"
 "BUZZ WIIIIIIIIINDRIP"

The D.A.R. clap their hands. The children shout, "COME ON, BUZZ". Others: "THERE HE IS" and "NO HE AIN'T". Then some one with a particularly loud voice starts shouting rhythmically, "WE WANT WINDRIP" --WE WANT WINDRIP" and the chant is quickly taken up by everyone, young and old, and the station is ringing with it when:

BUZZ WINDRIP comes through the French windows out on the balcony. He is in a light dressing-gown, not much concealing his loud striped pajamas, and worn red slippers. His hair is tousled from sleep, and he is yawning, as though just awakened, but he waves to the crowd cordially, and smiles--a most attractive smile. Following him out on the balcony are LEE SARASON --also in dressing gown and pajamas, but much smarter, with a tucked-in muffler -- and one or two uniformed Corpo officers.

In the doorway, he sprays his throat with an atomizer, which he then hands to a secretary. Buzz holds up his hand and the murmurs and shouting from the crowd lull to complete, tense silence, when he begins to speak --at first in the easy, colloquial manner of a "Good fellow". His voice carries widely. For a sentence or two he is hoarse, then he speaks clearly.

Buzz

Well, this is a hell of a way to earn a living. Two hours sleep. Say, I wish the guys that say I want to be some kind of a phony dictator could travel on this trip with us. Why, say, these DICTATORS live in a big castle and sleep till 10 A.M. and have a

Buzz (cont'd)

flock of cuties bring 'em breakfast on gold plates --- French omelets with fancy sauce. But on this trip --we got time for about one meal a day, and its always Ole Mrs. Pullman's Southern Style Hash.

(Laughter, applause, BUZZ hushes it with upraised hand and speaks on more earnestly)

But seriously, folks, like Lee Sarason here --

(Hand a moment on Sarason's shoulder)

were wrong when they thought this trip was to educate the people about BUZZ. No. Its me that got educated.

(There is charm and apparently sincerity in his manner)

What grand people I've been meeting. Fifty thousand Iowa farmers in one inspiring throng, to protest against the wastefulness of the so-called representative government. Citrus growers in golden Florida. A great, magnificent procession of miners in Michigan. Steen million clerks and stenographers the whole length of Broadway, New York, from the Battery to pretty near the North Pole. And now you, the maple-growers and dairymen and merchants of the sacred old state of Vermont --the state of Horace Greeley. But, there is one great big But, my friends, --everywhere I have found the true American people DIVIDED --kept apart by the politicians who in their insensate selfishness befool the very constituents who have placed them on their tinseled thrones.

If you honor me with your votes, I shall not be president, --no, I mean that,--NOT BE PRESIDENT AT ALL, but the telephone central through whom every man in this great land, be he Vermont farmer or Seattle ship-captain, can get in touch with every other man so that --for the first time since 1861 --we can be joined in one unified nation that will sweep the world.

(Great applause. During it, Fowler is seen elbowing his way through a none too easily yielding crowd to the side of Foremus. As applause is dying down, with Buzz waving his thanks for it, Fowler reaches side of Doremus and shouts to him.)

Fowler

Dad. You got to get out of this.

Doremus

Eh?

Fowler

Just talked to Clarence Little's widow. She's dying. The Corpos murdered Clarence, made her shut her trap.

(While the two men talk on, agitated, unheard. Buzz continues)

Buzz

Dictator? Foully do they misuse and bandy words who assert that plain Buzz Windrip would ever desire to dictate anything to anybody. If one among you believes this --let him here and now strike me down.

Fowler
--head beaten in with black-jacks --

Buzz
See. I bare my breast to the bullets of the assassin.
(He does so, though not extensively. In this slight pause,
we hear Fowler explaining to Doremus)

Fowler
-stuck a knife in his back --
(Doremus expresses horror, as Buzz thunders on)

Buzz
But no, that shall never be --
(Curtain begins to descend, slowly)
For I long only to love and serve every American citizen.
(Great cheers heard as CURTAIN FALLS)

END ACT ONE.

(It is about three and a half months later, in the editorial sanctum of the Ft. Beulah Informer. On this February afternoon, the place presents a pleasantly untidy spectacle with its walls covered with framed pages, famous men's stories and posters announcing bygone county fairs.

Through the window at back one catches a glimpse of the bare branch of an elm tree and the red brick buildings across the square.

Before this window is a long table heaped with exchanges. At right are two tall, narrow windows looking out on the weathered brick wall of the building across the alley.

At left the one doorway in the room permits us to see a glimpse of ill-lighted hallway. Through this, entrances are made both from the print shop and mechanical departments, and from the street downstairs.

The principal articles of furniture are the two venerable desks of DOREMUS and LORINDA, as expressive of connubial bliss as twin beds. At the moment, LORINDA is seated at her desk pounding out a social item with an efficient two fingers upon an old-style Hammond typewriter. DOREMUS is at his own desk trying to edit a proof sheet, while listening to a pean of grief expressed by Mr. FRANCIS TASBROUGH. MR. TASBROUGH is enthroned in the one rickety arm chair provided for visitors. On the desk, constantly getting in DOREMUS' way, are TASBROUGH'S coat and derby.)

Tasbrough

--what I'd like to see you say in your editorial is, the government may have to monkey with agriculture but it's got to keep its hands off business.

(HE pauses impressively, but DOREMUS makes no comment. TASBROUGH breaks out anew.)

Here Windrip's been in office a month---and have the big industrialists seen any gratitude! That was a fine move the government made when it solved the unemployment problem---chased all the idle bums into work camps---rented them to private industry at seventy five cents a day---

Doremus

(Shortly)

It was peonage--

Tasbrough

But the point is, even with wages way down, I'm not making any profits. Taxes are terrible--a new tax on industry every five minutes--interference from inspectors---worst bunch of racketeers I ever saw.

Doremus

Been making you hire a lot of Corpos?

Tasbrough

(With a hopeless nod)
And none of 'em know anything!

Doremus

(Nodding)

I know--Didn't the Corpos hound me to fire Charley Betts and give his job to that kid, Julian Falck? Dog-goned embarrassing. Charley'd been with me for years and Julian was neighbor. Worked out all right. Charley had a little money.

(With some misgivings)
I wish Julian knew how to spell, though.(At this moment a row breaks out in the alley.
LORINDA leaps up, raises one of the windows right, looks down and calls:)

Lorinda

Scat! You boys let that child alone! Get out of that alley or I'll chase you out.

A Voice

(Young and insolent--from alley)
You and who else? Old maid!

Other Young Voices

(Chanting from the alley)
Old maid! Old maid!

(DOREMUS is out of his chair with a bound. He'll brook no insults to his LINDY. Shouts through window)

Doremus

I'll come down there and put the fear of God---

A Voice

Ah go shoot yourself! You won't do nothin'! I'm Shad Ledue's cousin!

Doremus

Why you-----

(Clamor breaks out anew. The bellow of stalwart DAN WILGUS is heard from alley.)

Dan's Voice

Beat it! I'll knock your heads together!

(Sound of boys running away, scared but still yelling derisively, "Like hell you will" and "Who said so". Sound dies out.)

Doremus

Look at 'em run! Dan Wilgus is better'n a whole police squad. Poor little devils!

(Calls out)

Let 'em go, Dan.

(Closes window, returns to desk and to TASBROUGH, who has watched incident with no great interest.

To TASBROUGH:)

That was Dan Wilgus, my foreman. Bunch of those Goose Creek kids--a whole slew of 'em in town since Shad enlisted their dads in the Corps.

(LORINDA has returned to her desk and to work)

Tasbrough

(Rising)

Lot of riff-raff. No respect for their elders, like you and I were brought up to. Well, I hope you have the courage to use the facts I've given you. Don't pussyfoot! Business is being strangled.

Doremus

(Mildly)

We'll see. I made some notes.

Tasbrough

(Crossing to LORINDA'S desk; to LORINDA)

And I suppose you'll be doing a separate piece about Mrs. Tasbrough's tea at the country club, and not just stick it in with the unimportant society items.

Lorinda

(Angrily)

Unimportant? Unimportant? I don't know the word!

Tasbrough

(Irritated)

Well, I'm just trying to help you folks by giving you something to fill the newspaper! See you soon.

(TASBROUGH takes up derby and exits huffily. DOREMUS and LORINDA look at each other, half amused and half irritated)

Lorinda

Well, say it!

(They laugh)

That cloth-head telling you to have courage, after the way you've criticized the Corps and--

Doremus

That's what an editor's for. Wonder if these schools of journalism give the bright boys instruction in how to smile while getting kicked. --I haven't got the nerve.

Lorinda

(Swiftly rises, crosses to him, embarrassedly pats his shoulder, and abruptly retires to her desk, muttering:)

Nerve? My dear! I know about the anonymous notes--lynching---

Doremus

(Jestingly)

I knew somebody'd been prowling through my desk. Don't you know that's sacred, young woman?

(Walks up and down; more seriously)

Oh, those notes are probably just a joke--some clown like Shad--- maybe those kids in the alley.

Lorinda

The men in masks that torutured the Massachusetts editor weren't kids!

Doremus

Oh, well, what the dickens.

(Now very serious)

Lindy, you know how anxious I am to have you here, but just the same--- Been thinking it over. I want you to resign.

Lorinda

Then there is danger!

Doremus

Hell, no! But you're getting jumpy. You'll be telling the truth one of these days.

Lorinda

You want me to quit now?

Doremus

Well, yes.

(Going to his desk; from under his Thesaurus draws a sheet of Associated Press flimsy--I.E., typed tissue paper)

A. P. flash from Washington. I'm waiting for the follow-up. One hundred members of Congress, and six members of the Supreme Court have been put under protective arrest.

Lorinda

(Standing; aghast)

I can't believe it! Things like that can't happen in America!

Doremus

(HE removes his spectacles and thoughtfully swings them)

It all did happen the day Buzz Windrip was inaugurated--when he armed the Corps.....Oh God, I wish I could get the rest of this story from Washington. Something's holding it up.

Lorinda

That means --- national censorship?

Doremus

(Bitterly)

Protective censorship! That's why you've got to get out of this, honey.

Lorinda

I won't.

Doremus

You've got to!

Lorinda

(Rather like a stubborn little girl)
No. Won't.

Doremus

Please go home. I don't want you here.

Lorinda

Doremus Daniel Jessup! I have never in my life heard such a wicked lie. Never.

(She snatches up her hat, jabs it on her head, snatches up copy-paper and pencil and takes light over-coat over her arm. She stalks to doorway from which she insists:)

You can fire me and fire me and fire me, and I'll always be right here at my desk at eleven o'clock every single morning.

(Exit LORINDA. DOREMUS skips to doorway to yell after her:)

Doremus

You will not! You've never been less than fifteen minutes late, and you never will be.

(Chuckling, looking fondly at the doorway, he returns to his desk, and becomes serious again as he puts his spectacles on and studies a galley of proof, marking it once or twice. HE thinks for a moment, scratching his chin, then shouts:)

Dan!

(Pause....DOREMUS glares at doorway and bellows)

DAN! DAN! DAN!

Voice of Dan Wilgus

(It is the same bull voice that we have heard driving the boys out of the alley)

Hold your horses! I'm coming!

(Enter DAN WILGUS, a huge black visaged man, gnawing an old corncob pipe and wearing an inky apron. HE lumbers to the desk of DOREMUS, who holds the galley proof out to him)

Doremus

We'll run this editorial after all.

Dan

We'll do no such a damn thing!

Doremus

(Angrily)

You make up that page right now, and make this the lead editorial.

(NOTE: the word is lead, to rhyme with deed, not with dead)

Dan

Can't.

Doremus

What do you mean, "can't?"

Dan

I mean I been reading through it again, and we're not going to have no such a piece in any paper I make up! Talking about Corpo machine guns ----want to have 'em turned on us?

Doremus

Are you scared?

Dan

(Belligerently)

Who, me?

Doremus

(Bitterly)

The celebrated wrestler!

Dan

Scared? Me? Listen! I'm so scared I ruined myself! Remember that editor out in Kansas two days ago---the Corpos tied him to the press and set fire to it! That's why I dumped this galley!

Doremus

They didn't burn up printers, did they? Only the editor.

Dan

Hell! I wasn't thinking of the editor---I was thinking of the press! I'll bet they took the paint off it. And that's a nice press we got downstairs.

(DOREMUS glares at him and heads for the door)

Where'd you think you're going?

Doremus

Going to try and reset this editorial myself.

Dan

(Pursuing him snatching galley proof)

All right, all right! If you're bound and determined to be a hero, I suppose I'll have to be one. Nineteen years now you been getting your way.

(Exit DAN, scowling at galley)

Doremus

(Shouting after him)

Eighteen.

Dan

(Reappearing in doorway)

Seems like eighty. Besides! I may be able to repair a linotype after the Corpos massage it with crowbars, but not after a Liberal Intellectual has been fiddlin' with it!

(Exit DAN. From now on there is a faint rhythm of machinery especially of linotypes)

Doremus

(Returns to desk)

Voice of Dan

(From outside)

Hey! Boss! Here's a big Corpo lummox to see you! Don't say I didn't warn you!

(Enter DAVID in imitation Corpo uniform followed by the smiling MARY in smart furs)

David

(Proudly marching up to DOREMUS)

Salute, private!

Doremus

(HE makes a pretense of playing at saluting, but HE doesn't do it very warmly, and he says doubtfully to MARY)

What's this the boy's got on?

Mary

(Cheerfully perching on the edge of the exchange-laden table, while DAVID importantly turns over the pages of an illustrated weekly)

I know. It is silly. But Julian Falck gave it to him--imagine!--bought it out of his first week's salary here!

Doremus

Well, thank God, for the last twenty years, about the only uniform you ever saw in America was the Salvation Army or the Kiss for Koolness Ice Cream vendor!

David

Ah, I like my uniform!

Doremus

Of course. Great men have worn uniforms. But you know a fellow can be a soldier of science, too -- a soldier of life instead of death -- like "Microbe Hunters" I was reading you.

David

You bet!

Doremus

(To MARY)

Going to see Fowler?

Mary

No, I was, but he's so worried---I guess you'll have to let me have some shopping money---about ten dollars?

(She crosses to DOREMUS' desk; he gives her a ten dollar bill; she nods thanks, while she continues, not airy now but worried)

I didn't want to tell you, but of course the paper will get it anyway--Dad, it's the most dreadful thing the Corpos have done. I thought it was pretty bad when they started interfering with you. Of course the press ought to have freedom. But NOW--they've laid their hands on medicine! And it had to come today when Fowler is at the hospital,

Mary (Cont'd.)

terribly worried, because he has a case with a persistent hemorrhage after a tonsilectomy---Do you know what Commissioner Swan has done? He's put in charge of the hospital, over Fowler's head, that horrible gland-treatment quack whom Fowler got run out of the County Medical Association. Will you protest in the paper?

(DOREMUS looks doubtful)

(From now on noise of linotypes and other machinery is a little louder, increasingly so to the point where it is stopped)

Will you?

Doremus

Yes, I'll try to---if there's any paper left to protest in.

David

Gimme a quarter, Grampa.

Doremus

And what do you want a quarter for, General?

David

Buy another cannon at the five and ten. Gee I only---

Doremus

(Almost savagely)

Cannon! Guns! Brassbands!

Mary

Yes, of course, it's too much.

(Rebukingly to DAVID)

I won't have you get any more soldiers.

(Enter DAN with another galley proof. Smiles at MARY; salutes DAVID....MARY continues to DAVID)

Skip along now.

(She shooes DAVID out, and herself EXITS with waves of the hand to DAN and DOREMUS. She closes door as she goes out.)

Dan

I got your blame editorial reset.

(Hands galley to DOREMUS....Sound of machinery has become louder---Pause while DOREMUS glances at galley, DAN placidly yawning and beginning to fill his pipe. Sudden and total STOPPAGE OF SOUND OF MACHINERY.)

Dan

What the----Machinery stopped!

(DOREMUS looks up, wondering at this.....DAN dashes to door, yanks it open, and there outside, rigid and military in their uniforms, stand SWAN and SHAD. Behind them are several uniformed CORPO PRIVATES. All are in uniform overcoats.)

Swan

(To DAN, jerking head back toward hall:)
Outside, you!

(While DAN is debating whether to fight or to obey--and finally doing the latter--SWAN strolls well inside the office, graceful and insolent, followed by SHAD, ungraceful and menacing.)

Doremus

Swan, you have anything to do with that machinery stopping?

Swan

(Indolently)

Almost everything, I should think!

(DOREMUS who has sprung up, sinks again into chair by desk; SWAN slips out of his overcoat, tosses it on table, and casually sits in the best visitors' chair. SHAD closes door and stands by it at attention. SWAN to DOREMUS:)

Do be calm, my dear fellow. We're both civilized human beings, and surely we should be able to discuss any differences we might have----

(HE has been peering over at the galley proof brought in by DAN which all this while DOREMUS has still been holding in his hand. Perhaps SWAN has been able, even several feet away, to read its heading. Now he springs suddenly, alarmingly, at DOREMUS as though he were going to choke him and from DOREMUS' trembling hand snatches the galley proof, from which, as he returns to his chair, he reads:)

Murder By Machine Gun. Very pretty alliteration. I congratulate you, Doremus.

Doremus

My name is Jessup!

Swan

(Playfully)

Oh no, it wouldn't be, not between friends, would it, Doremus? I'll call you "Doremus", and you just call me "Commissioner".

(Now sharply, viciously)

Jessup, I came here to raise hell with you about your seditious criticisms of the Corporative Government. But I hadn't expected anything so beastly as this new affront--

(Shaking proof at DOREMUS)

Instead of just giving you counsel---I'm going to give you a trial!
.....Sergeant Ledue!

Shad

Yessir.

Swan

Station a couple of privates by the door. You sit here at the desk and take notes.

(SWAN continues addressing DOREMUS---but not so savagely now; rather with his favored mock-pedantic teasing--while in dumb-show SHAD, during the following opens door, summons TWO CORPO PRIVATES with army rifles from the hall;

Swan (Cont'd.)

closes door and stations PRIVATES on either side of it; stalks to DOREMUS' desk, insolently drags a chair up to it, snatches copy paper and pencil almost from under the hand of DOREMUS---who is still seated---and begins to make notes.)

According to a new decree, my dear Doremus, -- oh I know the gnawing curiosities of you pressmen--I'm not only in political and military command of this district, but also, I have the power to hold court martial, with myself as judge, prosecutor, and defense--and you'd be simply thrilled to see how the three of me agree on major issues! So now-----

(Takes elaborate gold cigarette case from inside tunic, lights cigarette)

Oh, I'm so sorry. Do have a cigarette?

(Holds cigarette case toward DOREMUS--though quite out of his grasp. DOREMUS ignores it and snarls)

Doremus

I don't care much for this cat-and-mouse game. If this is a trial what are your charges?

Swan

Charges? Oh my only aunt! Just trifling things---high treason and incitement to murder and airy trifles like that--you know; the usual dreary legal tid-bits--and all so easily gotten rid of if you would just remember your venerable years and your responsibilities to your family---it would be too sick-making if anything happened to them, you know---and played along with us. I would simply adore explaining some of our secret plans, in that case. You'd see such a new light!

Shad

Jessup couldn't see a new light if it was on the end of his nose.

Swan

Hush, my dear Sergeant!And of course, Doremus, I do want ever so delicately to urge you to give me a list of all the people whom you know to be opposed to the Corporative Administration.

Doremus

Spying?

Swan

Just so! It could be.

Doremus

Oh, God, Swan, don't try to impress me with your fancy phrases out of highbrow detective stories. I can read, too!

Swan

Not really! I shouldn't have fancied so from your proofreading! But do, I pray you, try to show a little more formality at this trial--for curiously enough it is a trial!---for treason!

(DOREMUS impatiently moves as if to grasp something on his desk. SHAD slaps his hand and grunts while SWAN, ignoring this, studies him and continues:)

One really ought to take you out and shoot you--Oh yes, one has the power to--

Swan (Cont'd.)

(SWAN nods pleasantly)

But it might be more amusing to keep you here,
 (looks at SHAD and smiles to himself)
 so I announce as my official decision--oh, quite official, my dear Doremus---that from now on the editor of this paper is to be Sergeant Ledue!

Doremus

(Incredulous)

Shad?

Swan

Why, my dear fellow, I'm picking him because you're old and loving co-workers.

(SHAD guffaws; DOREMUS too furious to speak)

We do hope you'll go on writing---playing with the many-colored word. But Sergeant Ledue will tell you precisely what you are to write, and how to change it afterward----

(DOREMUS starts to get up and do some vague violent thing. The CORPO PRIVATES at the door take a step forward, but as SHAD roughly pushes DOREMUS back into his chair, the CORPOS go no further. Meanwhile, SWAN is talking on, more sweetly than ever:)

And if he complains, then a little instruction with----

(In on this, so suddenly and noisily that we do not hear the rest of SWAN'S sentence, pushing the guards away from him, ENTERS FOWLER GREENHILL, banging the door open, then shut again. HE stands over SWAN'S chair menacingly. SWAN reaches into his inside pocket. SHAD and the TWO CORPOS gather about FOWLER as he shouts:)

Fowler

Swan, I've had enough! One man is going to protest against your Corpo swinishness! I shut up. I wanted to keep myself clear for my medical work. You've taken that from me---But now you've started on Jessup!

Swan

You're entirely mistaken, my dear doctor. I've been misrepresented.
 ----Who 'phoned you?

Fowler

None of your business.

Swan

(To SHAD and the TWO CORPOS)

Fall back there, will you?

(But when SHAD and CORPOS fall back, they are just behind FOWLER, and SHAD loosens the .44 automatic in his holster)

I came here to offer Mr. Jessup---

(HE is playing for time until the CORPOS get in a strategic position. Sharply, then, to SHAD and CORPOS)

Grab him!

(They do; and while FOWLER struggles, SWAN yawns.--

Swan (Cont'd)

(To SHAD)

This comrade bores me. Take the bastard out in the alley and shoot him, will you?

(The powerful SHAD and his two men are too much for FOWLER. They rush him off his feet and out of the door before he can resist. DOREMUS struggles to his feet and, holding up his arms like an anathematizing priest, is about to speak when through the door--- standing politely aside to let their comrades through-- ENTER TWO MORE CORPO PRIVATES, and stand on guard, while SWAN airily throws one leg over his chair arm and lights another cigarette.

A tense pause. DOREMUS' arms drop to his side; he trembles, and big tears come to his eyes.

The telephone on his desk begins to ring--rings twice in the pause. Then SWAN, simpering with amusement, hitches his chair nearer to the desk, and takes up the telephone, speaking sweetly into it)

Swan

Hello.....No, Mr. Jessup can't come to the telephone just at the moment.....This is just a friend of his.

(Placing mouthpiece against his chest, receiver still to his ear, he listens to what is being said on the telephone; then turns to DOREMUS:)

It's your daughter. She wants to know about some man the Corpos have placed as superior over her good husband, Dr. Greenhill.

(Again speaking on telephone, but, as he does so, first looking at DOREMUS and smiling, then in leisurely way rising with a sharp glance at the alley windows, right.)

Oh yes, Mr. Jessup is here, but he doesn't seem to be feeling very well.

(The crack of several rifles firing together is heard from down in the alley; then a long scream from FOWLER GREENHILL, followed by the single crack of SHAD'S pistol. Holding telephone away from him, SWAN growls at DOREMUS, who has sunk in his chair, his head hidden in his hands)

Clumsy shooting, to need the pistol.

(Raises telephone receiver again to his lips and, as CURTAIN begins to fall slowly, says in honeyed tones:)

No, Mrs. Greenhill, I'm afraid your father wasn't able to do anything for him.

C U R T A I N

End of Scene I.

ACT 2 - SCENE 2

TIME: A fortnight after the preceding scene.

PLACE: Washington, D. C., the private office in the White House of PRESIDENT HERZELIUS WINDRIP, otherwise "BUZZ." You have the impression of a large handsome room, but the lights are so arranged that you see only the center of it, with the President's large desk, and an unexpected grand piano nearby; a tall entrance door, and behind the desk a tall "French" window through which from time to time may be seen a sentry walking his post on a terrace outside. He is in the uniform not of the Corpsos but of the regular U. S. Marines.

Through the window we see the Washington Monument outlined against a blood-red sunset, and in key with this quietly sanguinary mood is the Chopin which Secretary of State (as he now is) LEE SARASON is playing to soothe the Dictator and President, Buzz Windrip, who sits at his desk, listening blissfully.

Sarason is dressed like a British Foreign Office official: braided black jacket, double-breasted vest, striped dark trousers, Buzz in blue or gray, much more conservative than when we last saw him.

Sarason completes music and turns on piano stool to discover what may be the next mood of the incalculable Buzz.

Buzz

What d'you call that piece, Mister Secretary?

Sarason

Some Chopin.

Buzz

Oh sure — I know — I just couldn't think of the name of it. Say, there's a hymn I want you to play for me; it was my old mother's favorite. Trouble with the young generation today is, they aren't brought up with any respect for religion. That's why we have such a hell of a time putting the fear of God into these young Corpsos. Well! Well!

(Sharply -- impatiently)

Well! Why don't you play it?

Sarason

You didn't tell me the name of it.

Buzz

"When the Roll is Called Up Yonder I'll Be There."

Sarason

Sorry. Afraid I don't know ---

(At this, instantly, apparently causelessly,
Buzz goes slightly mad, leaps up, waving his arms
and screeching)

Buzz

God Almighty! Can't I depend on anybody? No co-operation!
No loyalty! Didn't I tell you to learn the whole God-damn
hymn book?(Strides to Sarason, still on piano stool,
shakes his fist unpleasantly near to
Sarason's nose)D'you know what your duties are, you swine? To do just exactly
what I tell you to! You think you're Secretary of State!
I made you and I can unmake you, right now, this minute. You
think you're necessary to me. Nobody's necessary to me! I'm
the President of the United States! By God, I am the United
States.

Sarason

(He is uneasy, but he has plenty of
courage and self-control)Sorry, Buzz. I'll learn it. And Buzz -- d'you mind if I say
something? I know what burdens you're carrying - - - - -

Buzz

(Wearily sinking into desk-chair again,
steam blown off)

Whole damn country traitors to me!

Sarason

-----and I don't mind your blowing up with me, but don't do it
with anybody else around.

Buzz

I know. Been talking like a crazy man. Forget it. Everything's
got on my nerves since that maniac tried to shoot me.(Peers at Marine Guard who is just passing
the window)

Sure that Marine is okay?

Sarason

(Refusing to be alarmed)

Sure...And careful of too much vengefulness. You have everybody
shot the minute you're suspicious...yet less than four months ago
you were worried stiff when the Corpsos killed their first man --
remember?

Buzz

Yuh. Ft. Beulah, Vermont. I used to think about that place
and wonder what kind of a fool it was got done in, and whether
he's got any neighbors that have the guts to kick.

Sarason

Probably not. Could such people possibly matter? An ant-hill.
But even so, they might start swarming. Sometimes I think you're

Sarason (cont'd)
beginning to wish the American people had only one throat to cut. Be careful!

Buzz

Aw, why can't you see the funny side of things, like when we started in politics? Remember that private burlesque show down in Natchez, and that red-headed broad that had to have her own lace pillow along with her?

(Giggles)

I don't get any laughs like that any more...I thought it would be more fun to be President...First American dictator in history, by God!

(Puts feet on desk)

I used to imagine myself coming right in here and slapping Abe Lincoln's feet off the desk and putting mine up on it. But nobody seems to like me any more. Even you.

(Gets up; meditatively paces room)

When I was a kid on the farm, I didn't get along very well with the other kids. I swore I'd make 'em pay for my being lonely. And I got popular. I climbed to this high office - and now I'm lonelier than I ever was...lonelier than any man ever was! Oh, well, you stick to me and --- and ---

(He is looking at memos on his desk; picks up small desk clock, glances at it. Suddenly irritated again)

Good God! Look at the time! Think I hired you to stick around and chew the rag?

Sarason

You're quite right. I must skip over to the State Department.

Buzz

(Tapping his desk)

This is the state department -- and all the departments there are! Your job is to stay here and help me. What's my appointment now?

(Buzz sits at desk again, looking as majestic as he can.)

Sarason

I'll ring for your secretary.

Buzz

You're my secretary, by God!

Sarason

(Picking up typed list)

Very well.....There's the press conference.

Buzz

Let 'em wait, the dirty spies! I don't need the newspapers any longer -- they need me!

Sarason

Old Senator Lutherne, of California, about the fruit-pickers' strike.

Buzz

Do I have to see him?

Sarason

Shouldn't think so -- we had all the strike-leaders shot yesterday.

Buzz

What d'you think I better do about 'em?

Sarason

(Slight suggestion of a smile)

Send 'em flowers. Flowers are cheap in California.

Buzz

Huh?

(It takes a moment to get the humor of Sarason's
remark. Suddenly laughs)We'll do that. Glad I knocked your ears down, Lee. You're
getting funnier already.

Sarason

You're always an inspiration to humor.

(Buzz looks at him suspiciously, but
Sarason goes on smoothly)A Mr. Tasbrough, representing the Northern New England Textile
Manufacturers, I believe. Don't suppose you want -----

Buzz

Want? Hell, yes. Of course. Always glad to see industrialists.
Shoot him in.(Sarason goes cat-like to door, opens it to mutter
to the assistant military aide to the President who
is in uniform as a Captain of the regular army, not
Corpo uniform. The aide summons and (while the military
aide closes the door from the outside,) Sarason ushers
the slightly awed Francis Tasbrough into the room. He
is heartily welcomed by Buzz.)

Come in, come in, brother Tasbrough!

Tasbrough

Awful kind of you to see me, Mr. President. Just brought a
few practical suggestions from some manufacturers. I know
how busy you are here in the White House and -----

Buzz

(Warmly shaking hands with Tasbrough)

This isn't the White House. This is the People's Home.

(Struck with his own creative genius, he shouts
to Sarason)Say! That's a swell idea! Just thought of it. Put it down.
The name White House is to be changed from today, to "The
People's Home."

(Sarason makes a note.)

Buzz (cont'd)

Sit down, brother Tasbrough.

(He and Tasbrough sit. Sarason stands in background attentive)

I'm particularly gratified to have the co-operation of the really big, responsible men of the country, like yourself. I hope everything's going well with you in New England. Labor troubles all cleared up?

Tasbrough

Absolutely, Mr. President --- thanks to you.

Buzz

Not to me, but to Mr. Secretary of State, Sarason, here! Meet Mr. Sarason -- the greatest secretary since Alexander Hamilton.

(Sarason and Tasbrough shake hands, the latter rising.)

Tasbrough

(To Sarason)

Didn't realize I'd have the honor ----

Buzz

(Waving Tasbrough to his chair again and boozing on while Sarason retires)

And what can I do for you, brother Tasbrough?

Tasbrough

Well, I was deputed to come here by a group of high-class citizens -- several of 'em millionaires! -- to put before you our feeling that we simply must have relief from so much taxation, and all these inspectors. I, myself, -- why, I voluntarily contributed ten thousand dollars to the Corpo Campaign fund, though I was asked for only a thousand.

Buzz

Ah! That's the spirit!

Tasbrough

(Swiftly becomes more confident, almost playful, at such attention)

So we feel-----After all, I represent what you might call the solid, moneyed interests, and money still holds the whip-hand, even in politics.

Buzz

Yes, we got to admit that, brother Tasbrough. Money is-----

(Military aide has opened door, summoned Sarason, whispered to him, and closed door again.)

Sarason comes to Buzz and interrupts him.)

Sarason

Sorry to interrupt, sir, but there's an important visitor -- Pastor Prang of Zenith. He wants to see you immediately.

Buzz

Oh, yes. I'm expecting the dear old fellow.

(To Tasbrough)

You wont mind if I let the Pastor come in for a minute, will you?

(Sarason shakes his head but Buzz ignores it)
You've probably heard him on the radio.

Tasbrough

I should say I have! He's Mrs. Tasbrough's favorite artist.
But probably you'd like me to step out.

Buzz

No! No! I want you to see how zealously we listen to criticisms -- so you can take word of it back to the big industrialists.

(Sarason has meantime returned to door and now, as Buzz nods at him, he admits Pastpr Prang, who comes in belligerently, ignoring Buzz's outstretched hand and his chuckling.)
Well, well, Pastor! How's the humble brown church in the humble old vale?

(Sarason has again closed door and now stands beside it. Tasbrough has modestly retired to a chair. He is just vaguely to be seen, at the edge of the lighted space. Prang ignores them both, as he launches on a sermon flamboyant enough, but quite sincere.)

Prang

I have not come here for any small talk! I have come here to denounce the wolves in sheep's clothing whom, to my eternal shame, I helped lead to the helpless flock -- I criticized this wicked and adulterous Administration on the radio,

(Buzz is leaning against his desk, half sitting on the edge of it, looking cynical. He sticks his thumbs in his vest arm-holes. Once he glances amusedly at Tasbrough, to see how he is taking it ---- But in general he is quiet, so that attention is centered on Prang.)
and now I find that your Federal Radio Commission has actually barred me off the air. And members of my League are being herded into labor camps like ordinary tramps!

(Buzz starts to speak but Prang silences him with a gesture and storms on.)
Your Corporations are striving to kill the soul of America that once marched on to freedom under the leadership of old John Brown! They command our ministers of the gospel to preach the glories of an Administration supported by scoundrels cloaked in the sanctity of the American flag! They dominate the motion pictures-----

Buzz

(Standing erect, interrupting Prang with dominating sharpness)
You're just four and a half months too late, my clerical brother. I can't use you any more. I'm only going to use four-minute speakers in the war!

Prang

Eh?

Buzz

Certainly. The war with Mexico -- about eighteen months from now -- all in the lovely autumn weather.

(Sarason has gone to the piano. He laughs and starts to play "Onward Christian Soldiers.")

Prang

We're at peace with Mexico-----

Buzz

So far.

Prang

-----not even a border incident?

Buzz

Border incidents will be plentifully provided.

Prang

YOU SHALL NOT plunge America into war to increase your unholy power.

(Sarason is now playing "Onward, Christian Soldiers" more loudly. Buzz, at desk, presses a buzzer. The door is opened by the same military aide. Meanwhile:)

Buzz

(Genially)

Always glad to have your skilled advice, Parson, but I'd be careful how I talked treason!

(Prang makes an inarticulate sound of protest and inquiry)

That's what the drum-head court martials would call it -- preferring a lot of greasers and Jews and God knows what to 100 percent Protestant Americans!

(Prang's agonized attention has swung between Buzz and the smiling Sarason, who is still playing the same hymn, and at whom Prang now cries -- not hysterically but with stern rebuke)

Prang

(To Sarason at piano)

Stop that sacrilege. You're worse than hell

Sarason

Thanks, Padre!

Buzz

(Continuing to Prang, still genial)

But I won't have you shot, or even tortured. I'll always love you for the best laugh I ever had in my life -- when you worked so hard to get me elected in that phony broadcast.

Buzz (cont'd)

(To Military Aide, at door)

Captain!

(Aide advances, saluting)

This man -- Prang is the name, I believe -- has been bleating too loud. Stick him in jail, where none of the good Americans he's been offending by the subversive doctrines can get at him.

(Sarason breaks off the hymn he has been playing, over and over, with one tremendous crash of chords, but still sits at piano, cynical, right leg cocked over left knee.)

We've got to protect free speech.

(Stops being genial; sharply to Aide)
Take the fool out!

(Aide lays hand on Prang's shoulder)

Aide

Yes, sir. And if there are inquiries, sir?

Buzz

He's had a nervous breakdown. Stick him in the insane asylum and keep him there, incommunicado!

Aide

Very well, sir!

Prang

You can't do that! Somewhere in you there must be some grains of mercy.

Buzz

Why, Parson, you'll have a nice little room and you can preach-----Or say!

(He guffaws. To Aide)
Got a deaf soldier you can depend on -- stone deaf?

Aide

I don't know, sir. There must be a deaf veteran in the Soldiers' Home.

Buzz

Send for him. He's to be the Pastor's guard. Prang, you can preach your head off and pray your head off, but you'll never have any audience but this deaf old coot -- and golly how you've loved audiences.

Sarason

And you said you wouldn't torture him!

Prang

(He has been growing more erect, more grave, more resolute. He has scarcely heard the last words of Buzz. Now he holds his hands up in prayer, and prays)

O Lord, our God, shield of the innocent-----

(Sarason begins to play something light, mocking, but not loud.)

Buzz

(Snarls at Aide)
Take 'im out. Ravin' already.

Prang

-----if it be Thy Will that Thy ministers shall suffer for their own most grievous blindness, yet in our far absence guide our flocks, In Thy name-----

(Aide has pressed the Pastor's shoulder.

He bows to Aide and marches with Aide out of the room, proudly, erect, not looking again at the other three in the room. Sarason is still playing, mockingly.)

Buzz

(Suddenly going into action, almost running to the appalled Tasbrough, yanking him to his feet and yelling at him)

And now you, you stinkin' little stooges! You see how scared I am of the Manufacturers' Association or anybody else! You go back home to your Association and next Tuesday I want you back here with bearer bonds for fifteen million dollars-----

Sarason

Twenty!

Buzz

That's right! -----bonds for twenty million dollars. Next Tuesday, remember. Before five, P.M.!

Tasbrough

We'll be paupers-----

Buzz

Should have thought of that before election. You paid ten thousand bucks campaign fund for Discipline. You're getting it.

Sarason

(At piano, still playing)

Mr. Tasbrough, didn't you ever hear the definition of dictatorship? Up to a certain point it's government by capitalists -- like you -- through hired bullies. After that, it's government by the bullies -- like me -- through the capitalists.

Buzz

See? Now git!

(He almost runs the terrified Tasbrough through the door, closes it again, and chuckles to Sarason.)

Say, we ought to make twice the money we do -- you meet such crums when you're a dictator!

(Military Aide suddenly appears in door.)

Aide

Anything else, sir?

Buzz

2-2-10

Nope, nothin'!....

(Suddenly his eye catches the vacant
window)

Say! Where's that sentry?

Aide

(Calmly)

I'm afraid he deserted his post, sir --

Buzz

(Uneasily)

Deserted - why?

Aide

He said when he heard the Secretary of State --
(Nodding toward Lee)

jazzing that hymn - he saw red.

(Lee stops playing. There is a peculiar
expression on his face)

The whole guard is acting very peculiarly.

Buzz

You don't mean mutiny - They're all marines.

Aide

A peculiar mutiny, sir -- they've started to whistle --
and their officers can't make them stop.

Buzz

(Wondering)

To whistle?

Aide

Yes, sir - like this!

(He whistles a few bars of "Onward
Christian Soldiers." Still whistling
he opens the door and goes out.)

Buzz

Damn that captain! I'll have his hide-----

Lee

(Holding up his hand)

Listen!

(They both stand still listening. Faintly
to their ears comes the sound of offstage
whistling -- the same tune the Aide
whistled. The volume swells - swells until
it fills the room, the entire theatre.)

Lee

(Frightened - almost like a girl)

Buzz --

(He edges toward Buzz as though seeking
protection.)

(The music continues as the lights fade.)

C U R T A I N

ACT 2 - SCENE 3

TIME: A few days after Scene II.

PLACE: Again in DOREMUS JESSUP'S sanctum. The place has undergone a few changes. On one wall is a poster for a Corpo meeting, and there is an imposing picture of President Windrip, draped in bunting. There is a new smaller desk. It is used by DOREMUS.

LIEUTENANT SHAD LEDUE, in uniform, hat cocked on back of head, is seated at DOREMUS' former desk. He is painfully reading a piece of copy, and marking it with a stub of pencil.

DOREMUS enters, cowed and deflated.

Doremus

How about Dan Wilgus, Lieutenant?

Shad

Hush up. I'm thinkin'.

(DOREMUS stands awaiting his master's pleasure. For him the pause is insufferable. SHAD looks up, holding up copy, and grunts:)

I guess that'll do now. Your account of the Corpo Council was all right, only not enthusiastic enough. You know what I mean - enthusiastic. But you stick around with me and you'll learn what real guys like to read.

Doremus

I wanted to ask you about Dan Wilgus.

Shad

(Arising, taking overcoat)

What about him?

Doremus

He tells me you fired him.

Shad

(Getting into coat)

We don't need him - he's no good.

Doremus

(Almost apologetic)

I'm afraid we do need him, Shad. He's the only experienced printer you've left me.

Shad

So you don't like the way I run things.

Doremus

I'm just trying to say we have somebody that understands printing.

Shad

Well, if you're so in love with that ink-slinger, you'll get him back. The guy's got three kids and he ain't saved any money. No time at all, he'll be in a labor camp, and then we can hire him from the Government for seventy-five cents a day. You ain't a very good business man, Jessup.

Doremus

Meanwhile, if we fall down on the posters, Swan'll blame me.

Shad

Commissioner Swan!

Doremus

Yes - Commissioner Swan, I mean. He might even blame you.

Shad

(Buttoning up coat)

All right, then, I'll show you I'm a good guy. You can keep Wilgus, but I don't want you pestering me any more now.

Doremus

Thanks.

Shad

And say, me and Swan've decided to print nothing about Francis Tasbrough killing himself in that New York hotel.

Doremus

All right...But he was a good friend. It's nice of you to feel-----

Shad

Say, since I been so nice to you -- Who handles your insurance?

Doremus

Judge Jarvis.

Shad

There's a fella blew in town peddlin' policies. He fixed me up with coverage on my new coop, real reasonable. Mr. Dimmick, his name is -- from Albany. I made an appointment for him to come and see you.

Doremus

(Dryly)

Splitting commissions with you?

Shad

Any skin off your back?

(Goes to door and shouts)

Dimmick!

(A crestfallen mouselike individual -- Mr. DIMMICK -- appears in the door. SHAD greets him expansively.)

Shad

(Cont'd)

Come in. Make yourself to home.

(To Doremus)

Jessup. This is Mr. Dimmick -- from Albany.

Mr. Dimmick

(He is unpleasantly fawning in his manner)

How'd do, Mr. Jessup. Like to analyze your present insurance for you -- no charge, no obligation.

Shad

(At the door)

Guess I'll go over to the Bijou and shoot myself a little pool.

(He pronounces it "By-joo")

(To Doremus)

Try and get along without me -- do a little thinkin' for yourself. But if anything important comes up, you can 'phone me, Jessup. G'bye.

Doremus

(Seating himself at his now, smaller desk)

Bye.

Shad

Ain't you forgettin' something?

(DOREMUS looks up and slowly, without smiling, gives a sloppy version of the Corpo salute. So does Mr. DIMMICK, rather better. SHAD returns it snappily, and exits, closing door.)

Doremus

I have plenty of insurance.

Dimmick

Not my kind.

Doremus

Every kind I need.

Dimmick

(Sidles to door, opens it a crack, makes sure no one is listening, closes it again)

I represent an old-line company...founded by George Washington. I'm sellin' liberty insurance.

Doremus

I don't know what kind of a schome you and Shad Leduc are cookin' up, but I'm not interested.

Dimmick

(Close to Doremus, confidential)

Leduc is a fool! Good thing for me that most of the Corpos are. I'm a secret agent of the People's Party. We're going to overthrow-----

Doremus

(Aghast)

I don't want anything to do with it! There isn't any People's Party any more. There isn't any people!

Dimmick

Hush! Don't argue.

(He has lost his seedy manner; becomes authoritative)

Listen carefully. Senator Trowbridge is in Canada. He's going to rally America against the Corpos. We're organizing an underground spy system. We want you to take charge in Ft. Beulah.

Doremus

Got out of here! I've got enough trouble-----

Dimmick

You can check up on me through your friend Ed Samson of Burlington. He knows all about-----

Doremus

I don't want to know anything about you.

Dimmick

(Without raising his voice, but relentless)

Last week, three leaders were burned to death in Pittsburgh.

Doremus

I can't help that. We're all helpless.

Dimmick

The daughter of a liberal professor was raped in Berkeley-----

Doremus

Last week the body of a girl was found in the snow -- right here in the outskirts of Ft. Beulah...Do you think I want to bring that to my daughter?

Dimmick

(Darting to the door, suddenly relapsing into the slovenly ineffectuality of the feigned insurance man.)

Quiet!

(LORINDA enters, goes to her desk, ignoring them)

Doremus

(Curtly)

Good day, Mr. Dimmick. I don't see much use of your staying around any longer.

Dimmick

(Half whining)

Well, I certainly hope you see your way clear to taking out some insurance. Remember our company was founded by George Washington.

Doremus

(Impatient to get him out)

Never mind that.

Dimmick

All right, Mr. Jessup. I'm going.

(At door)

If you change your mind, you can reach me through Ed Samson of the Burlington Paper Company.

(Repeats deliberately)

Remember -- Ed Samson.

(Exit DIMMICK, closing door.)

Lorinda

I must say that you weren't very cordial to him.

(Goes to DOREMUS' new desk for telephone book)

Doremus

I don't need any insurance, and it don't pay to get too chummy with strangers.

Lorinda

Look! He forgot some papers -- are they his? Skip along and catch him!

(She glances at papers; speaks uneasily)

What's this? Kind of funny --

(Reads)

George Washington Insurance Company...Americans, are you cowards? Ninety-six sharecroppers killed by Corps in Arkansas. Rabbi Vincent de Verze murdered-----

Doremus

Good Lord!

(Snatches papers from her, seizes match box, burns papers, crushes ashes in ash tray on his desk... lowers his voice and looks around furtively)

That fellow -- Secret Agent of the People's Party -- from Senator Trowbridge. Trying to badger me into joining 'em. Well, I'm not going to!

(LORINDA sighs, turns back to her desk, puts a sheet of paper in her typewriter, as DOREMUS continues almost plaintively, trying to defend himself against whatever she may be thinking)

I'm too old to be a hero! What could I do, anyway? If Fowler, with his nerve and huskiness, couldn't do anything, what use can The People make of an old dodo like me?

(LORINDA at her desk, listening but blank-faced)

Besides! If anything happened to me, what would become of Mary and Davy --and Mary half-crazy the way she is over Fowler's murderer. And Davy -- they'll have him a Corpo General if I don't stick around and use a little underhand influence on him.

Lorinda

I'm not blaming you. I'm glad you're being sensible!

(Knock at door)

Doremus

(Raising his voice in a pretty theatrical effort
to avoid suspicion)

Ought to get the county agent to write us a big story on Holstein breeding. We got a lot of dairy farmers that-----

(Opens door. HENRY VEEDER, a large-boned New England farmer, a white-haired patriarch, dependable, independent, intensely self-respecting. His hands are large, and when he sits he has a habit of resting his elbows on his knees and dangling his hands before him. His old clothes are neat. He wears not an overcoat, but a Mackinaw, with rubber overshoes, and an old fur or cloth cap...His speech and walk are awkward, slow, but he is decidedly not a peasant, nor a comic vaudeville "hick". He has the lasting quality of one of his own stone walls.)

Doremus

What can I do for you?

(Waves VEEDER to a chair. Both sit)

(LORINDA starts softly typing -- the noise of her machine must not interfere with the talk)

Veeder

My name's Veeder -- farm up on Mt. Terror. I don't know's you'll remember me, but your son-in-law invited me on a picnic-----

Doremus

Oh sure -- sure -- of course, Mr.....Veeder.

Veeder

I've been a reader of the Informer for so many years -- almost feel like you was a neighbor. So thought I'd come and ask---- My folks have been on my farm for a hundred years now -- nice big house -- nine rooms-- got a bathroom! We never made much money, but we got along all right. Brought up our family, and they're all married now, and moved away. Well, here a few weeks ago, the Corpos come to me and said: "You've got lots of room"--and they moved two families from Goose Creek in on me. Well, I couldn't kick on that. But my wife is poorly, and Mr. Jessup, I never see such people as them - not within smelling distance. They got to my hard cider, and they been drunk and fighting all the time. I did think some of running the whole shooting-match of 'em off one time. I got out my rifle I keep for woodchucks, but I'm a law-abiding man. I went and saw the Corpo officials, and I found they've grabbed those folks' houses for themselves and I got to keep 'em...and the woman and I used to have it so quiet, those winter evenings -- just the wind in the chimney. We're going kind of a little crazy, and thinks I, I'll go to see Mr. Jessup. Why, it was one of your editorials made me vote for President Windrip!

(DOREMUS, almost desperate, has risen, takes a turn about the room)

So I thought maybe you could tell us-----

Doremus

God, Mr. Veeder, if I only knew! I guess we can just be patient.

Veeder

(Rising, preparatory to going)

Patient? Well, sorry to bothered you. Good day.

Mr. Veeder! Even those Goose Creek brats -- you wouldn't do anything to them?

Vooder

Well, I was kind to 'em, first off - wiped their noses. But these children -- my woman and I have an old lame crow we kind of made a pet of -- it was always around the yard. These children took it and tortured it -- cut off its wings and staked it out on a bonfire -- I came back from the village and found 'em, and there was a Corpse there watching 'em, and laughing. The American people won't always be so patient!

(VEEDER is gone, suddenly, and DOREMUS stands staring at the closed door, his head bowed, his hands framing his cheeks, in sorrow)

(LORINDA fussily, carefully, covers her typewriter, puts papers away in a drawer, comes to him, puts a hand on his arm)

Doremus

(Looking out window, his back to her)
Life could've been pretty decent for us. Funny we never married when we had the chance.

Lorinda

Why don't we take the chance now? What else is left?

Doremus

I can't marry you. I'm not a man any more. I'm a eunuch. Frank Tasbrough was right, when he killed himself.

Lorinda

My dear! Don't blame yourself for everything that-----

Doremus

You can't depend on me any more... I can't depend on myself!

(LORINDA has again gone to lay a hand on his arm, he pats her hand. They are standing thus when the door is boisterously thrown open and SHAD bursts in.)

Shad

What you two little love-birds doing?

(DOREMUS walks back to his desk and sits down, LORINDA toward door, while SHAD dominates the scene in the center)

Have to cough before I come in. Well, why don't you laugh? Blushing, my God!

Lorinda

I'd forgotten blushing had gone out of fashion.

Shad

Is that some kinda dirty crack? And say, while we're talking about fashion --

(Unpleasantly gesticulating at her with open hand)

Shad (Cont'd)

Why in hell can't you learn your business, Lindy? Want to get canned? You been leavin' out half the Corp titles. When you write up a pink-and-white supper given by old Ma Hickon-lopper, you write that it was given by Mrs. Corporal Hickon-lopper, see?

(To DOREMUS, who has been staring at him with noticeable fixity)

Well, and what's eatin' you? One of those days I'll have to slap you both down! And listen -- there's a cutie slinging hash at the Buzz Windrip Beancup that would love to be a society editor. Well? Got any kick coming?

Doremus

On the contrary!

(He rises, goes to telephone, which is still on SHAD'S desk - formerly his own...He speaks to SHAD with a pleased suavity which astonishes LORINDA)

You've persuaded me, at last, to do something that will delight you.

(On the telephone)

Toll line, please...This is The Informer. I want to speak to Edward Samson, president, Burlington Paper Company, Burlington.

Shad

What's the big idea?

Doremus

I want to get in touch with your Mr. Dimmick. I've decided to take out some insurance.

(Glares at Lorinda; speaks blithely)

Lots of it!

Shad

Good for you! Now we're getting somewhere!

(LORINDA is smiling at DOREMUS lovingly as the curtain falls)

C U R T A I N

ACT 2 - SCENE 4

TIME: An almost wintry evening although it is now late April, some weeks later.

SCENE: Again in DOREMUS' living room. It is not much changed. The curtains are drawn, and the door (or heavy portieres) to the front hall is closed. The lights on. There is a low fire in the fireplace. The door to dining room is open.

On a gate-leg table are two half-played hands of double solitaire with chairs drawn up opposite each other at the table.

JULIAN FALCK in his Corps uniform stands at the bay window: draws curtain a little to peer out at the wind-swept street. LORINDA PIKE is in a far corner of the room rapidly writing at a shaky table, but frequently lifting her head to listen to the radio which squawks not too loud, carrying a deep trained voice which we have not heard hitherto.

Radio

-----and in Lincoln, Nebraska, Mrs. Leonard Minnet, wife of a Congregational minister, was killed when drunken Corpsos fired through the doors of a number of houses. This is Walt Trowbridge of the People's Party, broadcasting from Montreal on the true state of affairs in the United States. In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the steel cartel gave a lavish entertainment to President Windrip.

Lorinda

(Goes to radio and switches it off)

Anybody coming?

Julian

Nobody.

Lorinda

(Hands sheets to Julian)

Take this to Dan - story about the Corpsos closing Middlebury College.

(Julian takes the notes and vanishes through basement door...
LORINDA goes to his post at bay window.)

Voice of Mary Greenhill

(From outside)

There's a patrol sneaking through the back yard!

(LORINDA darts across the room, opens basement door, calls in softly.)

Lorinda

Doremus! Corpsos!

(Mary appears in door down R, unconsciously poses there a second while LORINDA commiseratingly stares at her. MARY is only half recognizable as the smart, self-confident young matron we saw in Act I. Grief over her husband's murder has made of her a nun of hate. She is in black crepe, unornamented, her hair plainly dressed. She is very pale, but she is not stooped or feeble. She is rigid with purpose.)

Lorinda

(Speaks to Mary pityingly, yet a little timidly)
You all right, dear? Head-----

Mary

(Impatiently)

Yes. Don't bother. Tell Father for God's sake look casual. I can't.

(MARY abruptly vanishes, and a second later -- as LORINDA goes to table, sits, and picks up one of the hands of solitaire, DOREMUS comes from basement door, shutting it. He is in his shirtsleeves, but quickly, awkwardly, yanking on his coat, he gets into chair at table opposite LORINDA.)

Doremus

(In a low voice)

That's good stuff of yours about closing the college. Put a scare into the teachers that are proving Windrip is a Caesar.

Lorinda

Sh-hh-----

(They have picked up the cards and DOREMUS snaps in a squabbling tone.)

Doremus

Red Jack on Black Queen -- what's the matter with you?

(Two Corpos, wearing uniforms, with overcoats and carrying service rifles, appear in the door down R, with MARY just behind them...They are puffing with cold, and blowing on their knuckles.)

Mary

These men forced their way in --

First Corpo

(To Mary)

You don't think much of Corpos, do you, dearie?

(EXIT MARY)

Second Corpo

Let her alone...My old lady'd feel the same way, if anything happened to me.

(To Doremus)

Sorry to bother you-----

Doremus

(He has remained seated, glaring)

What is it? What d'you want, my friend?

Second Corpo

Came to bust all the radios in this block. Walt Trowbridge broadcasting a lot of seditious junk from Canada.

(Reaches into radio, yanks out tubes, smashes them)
Don't try to fix that.

Lorinda

Oh dear! I did want to hear the Smoothie Quartette on the Delaware Machine Gun hour.

First Corpo

Crooners! Well, I guess you old maids have your bright moments!

Doremus

Now, how are we going to hear the Chief's straight-from-the-shoulder talks from Washington?

Second Corpo

(Quite seriously)

That's it -- just because a traitor like Trowbridge broadcasts a lot of lies, decent people like you and I have to suffer for it.

First Corpo

Fault of them seditious Canadians. We'll fix all that after we lick the Limous and the Canucks.

Doremus

(Mildly)

I thought we were going to lick the Mexicans.

First Corpo

Second Corpo, the Mexicans first, then the Canadians. Then I guess the South Americans. It's our manifest destiny, and we need colonies.

(Starting toward front door)

I wish it wasn't so cold outside.

Doremus

Good night.

First Corpo

Wait a minute. I always heard old Yoremus Jessup

(Sic - not Doremus Jessup)

here keeps plenty beer in the basement.

(Points to basement door)

That's the door, ain't it? I was in here once, cleaning chimneys.

Doremus

(Trying not to show alarm)

Beer in winter?

Lorinda

(Getting up)

I'll get you some coffee -- believe there's some hot, in the kitchen.

First Corpo

How about some schnapps? All you newspaper guys are boozers.

(He starts for basement door)

You wouldn't grudge a couple of loyal Corpos a drink, would you?

(As he approaches basement door -- DOREMUS and LORINDA in terror -- that door opens and JULIAN comes into the room.)

Julian

(Seemingly surprised)

Hollo, Al. 'Lo, Ford.

First Corpo

What the hell you doin' here?

Julian

Helping Mr. Jessup.

First Corpo

After hours? Now we got freedom, who the hell ever heard of a Corpo working after hours.

Second Corpo

(More gravely)

They might want to know at headquarters-----

Julian

(After a look at Doromus; to the Corpo)

Oh, I might as well split with you as the Sergeant.

(Takes from pocket a bottle of brandy)

I was pinching a bottle of the old man's Three Star Martol.
It's the last one.

Doromus

(Almost enjoying the farce)

Why, Julian! I ought to tell your mother!

First Corpo

Lotta good that'll do! The kid's got tough since he enlisted.

(He takes bottle from JULIAN and heads for front door, followed by SECOND CORPO.)

So long, Buddy. This makes a third of a bottle we owe you.

(They are out in the hall, and thumb their noses at JULIAN as he protests from room.)

Julian

Hey! I found that.

First Corpo

But you ain't out in the cold!

(They disappear...LORINDA going to bay window and peering out after them, turns to speak softly.)

Lorinda

You used your head!

Doremus

And my brandy -- prob'ly the last bottle of real imported stuff
in Vermont.

Lorinda

(Testily)

Guess our lives are worth one bottle of your horrible likker.

(JULIAN has relieved LORINDA at post at window.)

Doremus

(Gomial)

Well, maybe. Have to think it over!

(Re-enter MARY, down R. She speaks colorlessly.)

Mary

Have they gone?

Lorinda

Half an hour, those young men will be staggering.

Doremus

So much the better for us, Julian! Dan finished those pamphlets?

Julian

I think so-----

(Enter DAN, basement door, with a pile of mimeographed pamphlets)

Dan

Here's enough for Miss Lindy.

(LORINDA gets overcoat from front hall, and artics,
which she leaves on stairs. DAN, starting back down)
Got to hide the machine. Somebody lend me a hand.

(EXIT DAN)

(JULIAN and MARY follow him down, so does DOREMUS, taking
off coat again, but LORINDA halts him with a gesture.)

Lorinda

(Putting on her coat -- Doremus fondly helps her)
Try to get some sleep. If you start yawning at the office,
Shad's apt to suspect you.

(She goes to table, where DAN has left pamphlets and
begins to place them in long pockets sown in the
skirt of her overcoat.)

Doremus

You'll be careful. Won't you?

Lorinda

Careful as I can be-----

(JULIAN coming in from the basomnt. He is bundled in his overcoat. The pockets are bulging.)

Julian

(Cheerfully)

I'm off to Windrip Barracks...

(He taps his pockets)

with enough treason to seduce a regimont!

Doremus

Good luck, Julian!

Julian

Thanks, sir. 'Night, Miss Lindy.

(LORINDA waves farewell. He goes quickly out.)

Doremus

(Sighing; all his momentary gaiety gone)

He'll be caught -- sooner or later. I suppose I ought to stop him.

Lorinda

You couldn't. Not after what happened to Dr. Greenhill.

(MARY comes up from basomnt. She carries a couple of covered market baskets which she puts down while she gets her coat from the hall, meanwhile speaking.)

Mary

I'm taking the big car. I'll scatter pamphlets through Rutland and Woodstock -- I'll try to make White River. Don't expect me back before morning.

(DOREMUS goes to her and kisses her. Even under his caress her repression is stony.)

Doremus

Throw the pamphlets away, if the patrols chase you, honey.

(His hands are on her shoulders. Mary winces)

What's the matter?

Mary

(Dully)

Nothing.

Doremus

Are you hurt?

Mary

Flesh wound. It's all right. I put adhesive plaster on it.

Doremus

When did this happen?

Mary

Last night. A patrol fired at me. You heard about him.
It was I that ran him down.

(Irritably)

Oh, don't talk about it!

(She picks up one basket. DOREMUS timidly picks up
other and accompanies her to dining room door.. turns
to LORINDA)

Lindy, don't try to leave till I've gone. And, Dad, be sure Davy
isn't reading in bed.

Doremus

You'll be-----

Mary

Oh, yes, yes, yes! I'll run down the driveway without lights.

(At door takes second basket from DOREMUS and quickly
vanishes...DOREMUS sighs and closes door after her)

Lorinda

Do you wonder Julian takes risks, with her for an example?

(She finished tucking pamphlets into her pockets)

Doremus

She's too brave. She's stopped being human.

Lorinda

Best agent we have. Well, I-----

(But she does not go yet: Glances at DOREMUS as he
sits again at table, looking and sounding discouraged.)

Doremus

Mary under gunfire -- you sneaking through the sleet to stuff
propaganda into mail boxes-----

(Pause)

while I lie snug between sheets!

Lorinda

(Behind his chair)

It takes more grit for you to stay here, acting dumb while you
worry about us -- waiting and waiting --

(Her hand on his shoulder)

Doremus

Maybe. I learned that when they arrested Cady, the Bennington
editor, and tortured the poor devil into admitting he wrote
my pamphlets --

(Bitterly taps the table)

tortured him while I had to sit here and keep my mouth shut.

(Lorinda's hand, timidly smoothing his cheek, comforts him)

But I had to do it. And I want you, all of you, to do what I did --
to go on with this work -- to keep silent -- to forget me -- to
revile me -- if you have to -- when the Corpos do find the man that's
been writing the pamphlets!

Lorinda

(Trying to flee from reality)
Oh, they'll never find you.

Doremus

(Almost gay again, for a moment)
I certainly hope not!

(Pause...Then he is very serious again, while she sits down and smokes a cigarette with an apologetic:)

Lorinda

Just one -- need it, those days.

Doremus

They probably will get me. Sometimes I almost wish they would, so I could expiate-----I killed Fowler Greenhill! This tyranny isn't primarily the fault of Big Business or of the demagogues. It's the fault of all the respectable, Doremus Jossups that let the crooks come in without a protest. I can't blame Buzz Windrip. It's us -- the good "citizens".

Lorinda

Yes -- we're probably doing our plotting about two years too late.

(Rises abruptly, chuck's cigarette, speaks resolutely)
Well! On the job.

(Picks up overshoes which she has left on lowest step of stair)

Doremus

(His face and voice gentle)

Let me help you.

(Takes overshoes from her hand)

Let me pretend I'm taking care of you -- just once -- before I send you out into the battle.

(He waves her to sit down, which she does, on third step of stairs while he, sitting sideways on first step, puts on her overshoes -- she smoothing down her skirts in modesty.)

But I want you to promise -- if they catch me -- that you will testify against me, if it's necessary to clear yourself, so you can go on with the work. Will you promise?

Lorinda

Would you do that to me?

Doremus

(After a long pause -- he has finished with the overshoes and given her foot a little fond pat -- and he stars out into the room)

Yes-----

(Almost inaudibly)

If this cause demanded it.

Lorinda

(The woman in her bursting out)
Is any cause worth this?

Doremus

YES, this cause is!

(Speaking with slow, unaffected eloquence)

To help preserve liveralism. And reverence for truth. They're being threatened all over the world. America must guard them. I've been reading history, and I'm convinced that everything worth while has been accomplished by the free, inquiring, critical spirit -- and that the preservation of that spirit is more important than any pride, any party, any flag, any social system, red or white or striped.

(They both sit silent a moment. Then she gets up, slips down the stairs, past him, and speaks brusquely, breaking his mood)

Lorinda

I better get started.

Doremus

(Also rising, facing her as she looks back at him)

Lorinda, my dear, I'm going to kiss you-----

Lorinda

You are not! Just when I've made a hard-hearted secret agent out of myself----- No! I hate sentimentality.

(Marches to door, and throws back and entirely contradictory)

I try to!

(She goes instantly as DAN appears ponderously at basement door. HE has on his old overcoat)

Dan

Well, another day, another dollar!

(Comes out into room)

Got the minniegraphing

(Sic - he means "mimeographing")
outfit hid in the barrel of apples.

(Hands papers to DOREMUS)

Here's your notes and Miss Lindy's for the next issue -- hot stuff -- better hide 'em good.

Doremus

(Picking up large red book on table)

I'll stick 'em in between the pages of old Dr. Rabelais.

(Laughs)

Just get it out to plague Lorinda. She thinks it's dirty.

Dan

(Making for front door)

Wouldn't hide 'em in a book -- first place burglars always looks for money, I've heard.

Doremus

Oh, it'll do till morning.

Dan

I s'pose so ... Night!

Doremus

(Putting book in book-case)

Lorinda! I don't think I'll tease Lorinda any more.

(Locks the front door, turns out the lights, then goes out and scratches hole in front on window to look out. The wind can be heard blowing the sleet... He can vaguely be seen from light above at the top of the stairs)

Lorinda!

David's Voice

(From upstairs, sleepy, petulant)

Mama! Mama!

Doremus

(Calling)

It's all right, Davey. Grandad's coming -- he's still here -- still here --

(Starts upstairs)

(Lights change slowly to indicate lapse of time to morning. Noises heard in kitchen and voices off stage. Lights come up on DOREMUS, laying his own fire in fireplace)

David's Voice

(Through door from dining room)

Can I have some waffles, Grampa?

Doremus

(As he works at fire)

A boy that isn't hungry enough to eat oatmeal can't eat waffles.

David's Voice

(Gay and affectionate)

Want to bet on that?

Doremus

Wouldn't go that far.

David's Voice

Grampa! Grampa!

Doremus

Well?

David's Voice

When are we going to have a hired girl again?

Doremus

(Straightening; dusting off hands)

Don't you think it's nice to play camping-out?

David's Voice

Yes, but I don't like washing dishes so good.

(A hammering at the front door. DOREMUS goes and opens it. In come SHAD LEDUE -- in uniform of Lieutenant of Corpsos -- and squad of CORPO PRIVATES; three or four of them, not more.)

Doremus

Heavens you're up early! What's the trouble?

Shad

(Mitiong squad of Corpos to stand at one side,
at ease; one of them to search the upstairs)

We're havin' a book-burnin' on the Green tonight.

Doremus

A what?

(HE closes door to dining room)

Shad

Going to burn all this subversive literature and a lotta smutty
stuff that's corrupting public morals. Got any objections?

(As though HE hoped DOREMUS might have)

Doremus

You won't find any subversive books here.

Shad

(Going to bookcase)

The hell we won't! I used to work here!

(HE reaches up and removes a book from the shelves)

How about this book now?

Doremus

It's a detective story.

Shad

(Heavily reading - but not too heavily, for SHAD
is a connoisseur of pulp magazines, and from a
Goose Creek standpoint, almost a scholar)

"The Murder of Roger Ackroyd". What d'you mean that ain't sub-
versive? I was reading where there's a Commissioner named Ackroyd.
Or maybe it was Croyden. Anyway, murder ain't no business for
civilians to monkey with.

(HE throws the book on the floor and turns to
further inspection of the bookcases)

How about this fellow Charles Dickens? Wasn't he a Communist?

Doremus

(In some alarm)

Certainly not!

Shad

(Throwing volumes from the set of Dickens
on the floor also)

Well, I heard about him. Seems to me he done a lot of complaining
about conditions. Guys ought to let conditions alone!

Doremus

But Shad -- uh -- Lieutenant, that was almost a hundred years ago.

Shad

(Continuing unperturbed to drop books on floor)
Makes no difference. Dead skunk stinks bad's a live one.

24-32

(The CORPO whom SHAD had motioned to search the second floor now returns with two books and grunts to SHAD)

Corpo

Found these, Lieut.

(Pronounced Loot)

"Alice in Wonderland" and "Omar----" something.

Shad

(Motioning to pile of books on floor, on which Corpo drops the two)

Burn 'em two. Probably seditious----

Doremus

But Lieutenant -- really -- "Alice in Wonderland" -- they'll laugh at you.

Shad

Well, I'm goin' to have a bigger blaze than they did at Montpelier. Prove that this town is twice as literary!

(From front hall appears LORINDA, wet, bedraggled, staggering with weariness, SHE peers quickly at CORPOS, then straightens herself and speaks as casually as possible)

Lorinda

Is Mary up --- Why! What's happening?

Doremus

Shad's having a book-burning.

Shad

(To LORINDA)

See any bad books here, old lady?

Lorinda

(Laughs - looks at DOREMUS -- this is a good joke on him)

I most certainly do-----

(DOREMUS and LORINDA both look at corner of bookcase, where stands prominently the often debated Rabelais-- HE in alarm, SHE humorously)

Doremus

Lindy.

Shad

(To DOREMUS)

Shut up, you!

Lorinda

It's that big red book in the corner -- Rabelais.

(Still laughing; proud of her ease with SHAD)

And don't let him tell you it isn't dirty.

(DOREMUS stares in agony while SHAD clumsily looks for Rabelais and takes it out)

Shad

Pretty ripe, eh? Maybe we won't burn that one.

(Takes down and opens it; the papers which DOREMUS hid in it the night before are revealed)

Doremus

Don't bother -- just some notes for an essay.

(SHAD has dropped one sheet of notes. HE stoops and picks it up, with agonizing slowness, then reads it while LORINDA from DOREMUS' tone, has perceived that something is wrong, and stares at him, then at SHAD, suddenly aghast)

Shad

Attention!

(CORPO SQUAD straighten, stare. SHAD strides to DOREMUS, strikes him, and bellows)

You damned old traitor! Who's in this with you?

(LORINDA quivers -- A CORPO gesticulates to HER to stay out of this)

Doremus

Nobody.

Shad

Don't lie to me!

(To his SQUAD)

Couple of you search the joint -- look for papers with any writin' on 'em. Get busy!

(A CORPO pounds upstairs, another darts into basement, rest stand eager.....DAVID appears in door down R and says placidly -- full of breakfast)

David

(To DOREMUS)

What is it, Grampa?

Shad

(To DAVID)

Come here, kid!

Lorinda

(As SHAD seizes DAVID'S hand)

Leave the child alone!

Shad

Keep outa here -- or I may forget you did me a favor.

(To DAVID)

I won't hurt you -- if you tell me the truth. I just want you to tell me -- who comes to see your Grandad late in the night sometimes?

David

I -- I don't know -- they make me go to bed so early.

Shad

I see -- gettin' the kid outa the way for your plottin'.

(To DAVID)

Where do they keep the castor oil, kid?

David

(Starting to cry)

I don't wanna take any castor oil!

Shad

You ain't gonna take it. Your Grandad's gonna take it. Ain't that a swell joke? That's a Corpo joke -- give castor oil to a grown-up!

(HE laughs and nudges DAVID who does not laugh, but looks at him with growing horror.)

Where do the folks keep it?

David

Upstairs in my mother's room.

Shad

(To a CORPO)

Gawn get it -- one of the bathrooms.

(The CORPO runs upstairs laughing. The CORPO who has been in basement appears in the doorway. He carries a steel fishing rod. He speaks to SHAD)

Second Corpo

He's guilty as hell, Loot. I found a whole mimeograph outfit hid in the basement and a lot of seditious printing-----

Shad

(To SECOND CORPO)

Fine!.....What d'you think you got there?

Second Corpo

Steel fish-rod. Always wanted one

(Chuckles)

and I don't guess Comrade Jessup'll be usin' this!

(The CORPO, sent for the castor oil, appears on stairs, hustling down with castor oil bottle. Shouts down from stairs.)

First Corpo

Here y'are, gants!

Lorinda

(To DAVID - sternly)

Go upstairs, David!

David

(Agonized)

Grandpa! Grandpa!

Doremus

(Quietly)

It's all right, dear. Better go upstairs.

(Exit DAVID, staring down from the stairs.)

Shad

(To DOREMUS)

'Course you know you're going to concentration camp, but if you want to get there all in one piece, you'll start telling me right now who those notes are for.

(To LORINDA)

Old lady, you tipped me off to this guy, so I'm going to do you a favor -- box seat at a Corpo Treason Investigation.

(Studying her)

Don't know how to make yuh out. Always thought you was sweet on the old duffer. Say, if you are, and you know who's been plotting with him, better speak right up, and you'll save him a lot of grief.

Lorinda

I don't know anything-----

(Speaking with the greatest difficulty)

He was an old friend of mine, but if he's guilty, he'll have to suffer.

(She marches away, sinks in the low rocking chair, sits rigid with horror)

Shad

Okay! Give 'im the oil then -- the whole bottle.

(The CORPOS holding DOREMUS surround him and in spite of his struggles, force him into a chair, then force the castor oil bottle between his lips. SHAD jeers:)

Hold his nose. Make 'im swallow. Then lay him out on the table. God, ought to brought a whip -- Hey!

(In delight, snatches up steel fish-rod which Second Corpo has laid on a chair. Speaks with self-admiration, as he picks up fish-rod and snaps it)

Golly, what an invention I've made -- Corpos spending money on steel whips, when there must be a fish-rod like this in

(CORPOS stand back snickering at the drooping DOREMUS)

Boggone near every house in New England! Say, I bet I get my promotion for this invention.....All right, boys -- lay him on the table.....

(As the CORPOS again make for DOREMUS - quick CURTAIN)

C U R T A I N

End of Act II.

ACT III. - SCENE I.

TIME: A May evening, the following year.

We are again in the Jessup living-room. It has undergone changes. The book shelves are vacant. The hole of a broken window pane has been plugged up with cardboard. The basement door is open and pressed back against the wall, an arrangement necessitated by the fact that it has lost one of its hinges. The radio has been removed.

It is past nine by the clock on the mantel.

LORINDA is in the open doorway. MARY, dour in her black clothes, sits huddled in the low sewing rocker. She is sewing a button on a shirt. Beside her is a stack of laundry.

But the most startling change to be seen in the house of DOREMUS JESSUP is the presence of CAPTAIN SHAD LEDUE taking his beefy ease on the sofa.

Lorinda

(Calling)

David! David! It's after nine. Come right in here!

David

(Appearing outside - in Corpo uniform)

Aw, I don't want to -

Lorinda

(Clapping her hands together)

Young man, you march yourself right in here this instant!

David

(Comes in, grumbling)

Ah, gee, Grandpa'd let me stay out.

Mary

(In her dull voice)

David!

David

I'm sorry, mother.

(Goes and kisses her)

Lorinda

(To DAVID)

You promised to be home by eight o'clock.

(Sternly)

You've been with that Goose Creek gang ... over behind the tannery.

David

Aw, they're fun!

Shad

(To LORINDA)

So you don't like him mixing with my folks.

Lorinda

Go on to bed, David!

Shad

Those kids'll be all right ... when I get 'em organized into a Corpo Boys Battalion.

Mary

(Looking up)

David, tomorrow you're not to wear that uniform.

David

Aw! Please!

Shad

You mean, he'd better wear it. It's a protection to him.

(To DAVID)

You wear your uniform ... You got one before the other punks. That gives you the jump on 'em ... And maybe I'll make you a sergeant in the Battalion.

David

(Eagerly, leaning over the stair rail)

Hot damn! Would you, Captain?

(LORINDA and MARY look at each other unhappily)

Shad

Go on to bed! I said - maybe!

David

(Stiffly)

Yes, Captain.

Mary

(Gently)

Up to bed, now.

(DAVID kisses MARY and LORINDA, then HE draws himself up and gives the Corpo salute. SHAD returns it. DAVID exits, top of stairs. LORINDA sits and darns.)

Shad

That kid might grow up to be a captain, even if he has got a grandad in the bull-pen. It's wonderful the opportunities the Corpos have brought to the kids of this country.

(MARY bites a thread)

Lorinda

(Saying something to hide her wrath)

You shouldn't bite threads, Mary ... They say it's bad for the teeth

Shad

(Getting up and stretching)

Mary always did have good teeth...sorta goes with her horse-faced style
o' beauty ... doesn't it, baby?

(HE goes over and places his cheek against hers)

Mary

(HER hand on the long, slender scissors in the
sewing basket)

Don't -

Shad

What's the matter? Still stand-offish to the Corpos? You better not
be to me, baby! I'm running things here now - Swan ain't been here
more'n once-twice this past year.

Mary

(Without moving)

Your beard's hurting me.

Shad

(Releasing HER)

Huh! I guess you ain't used to a real he-man after that over-scrubbed
pansy doctor.

(Contemptuously)

I remember when I used to work here - he was always washin' ...

Lorinda

I don't doubt you found that offensive.

Shad

(Smugly)

I may not be any rose-bud, but I've did all right for myself.

(Really putting on side)

I've got Frank Tasbrough's dumb son runnin' the factory as my errand
boy, and - I got Editor Jessup sent up for treason - him and his hairy
friend, Dan Wilgus - AND -

(Sneering at MARY)

I got the stuck-up Mary washin' my shirts and darnin' my socks -

(HE guffaws)

And do I love it!

Lorinda

You might have some sympathy for working people -

(Ironically)

You were once a hired man.

Shad

You had to get that in, didn't you? "Once a hired man always a hired
man" ... that's your motto ...

(Glowering at MARY)

Well, I can get plenty of girls - good-lookin' girls with meat on 'em...
I'm not lookin' for any old sack of bones like Mary ...

(Laughs boisterously)

She's cold as wet wash ... you couldn't tell her from the sheets.
They'd both smell like bluin'.

Shad (Cont'd.)

(HE stands looking down at MARY, trying to "get a rise out of her." At last HE seizes one of the neatly folded shirts.)

Let's see how good you are as a washwoman ...

(HE flips the shirt open)

Lousy!

(HE throws it on the floor)

Mary

(Voice as before)

Fold the shirt again, Linda.

Shad

(Placing his feet on it)

You'll wash it again!

Mary

(As before)

Lay it over there!

Shad

(Utterly exasperated, mimics)

"Lay it over there!" You ain't got the guts of a two-bit floozey ...

Why don't you fight me - why don't you bite me?

(HIS voice has become shrill. HE gets control of himself)

Who're you to get excited over - you ain't nothin' but an old crow.

(HE pauses and rubs his jowl)

I wonder what it'd be like to have a dame that's scared of me ...

Lorinda

Shad Ledue, you get out of here!

Shad

(Seeing they are finally scared)

Might be somethin' different - I'm tired of skirts that're too anxious ...

(There is an ugly look on his face. MARY keeps on sewing, head bowed.)

Lorinda

(Choking)

Shad!

Shad

(Advancing)

Lookit here ...

(Suddenly HE stops in his tracks. HE listens.

From overhead comes the drone of a motor)

Put the lights out!!

(They don't move. They don't understand him)

Put the lights out, I tell you! It's an airplane! I hope to God it's one of ours!

(HE runs and switches the light out. They stand by the window, quietly listening)

Lorinda

What is it?

Shad

It's the air corps. More than half the regular army fliers are disloyal ... they've joined the rebels ...

Lorinda

The rebels!

Shad

(As the drone of the plane grows louder)

Walt Trowbridge's rebels in the middle west ... they bombed Chicago yesterday.

Lorinda

They've kept us from knowing

(SHE goes toward the door)

Shad

Don't show a light! Keep away from that door!

Mary

(Raising both her arms - the long scissors in her hand gleams in the moonlight)

I'd forgotten that you could be scared!

(There is new life in her voice)

Shad

I'm not scared! I'll fight anybody that'll fight fair! But these cowards

(There comes a hollow boom from outside, followed by a flash and a reverberation, that shakes the windows)

Lorinda

It fell near the railroad ... They didn't hit the town ...

(SHAD runs to the front door. HE can be seen outside in the moonlight)

Shad

(Shouting)

Come down here and fight like men

Lorinda

(Wearily, from the door)

Be still, Shad ... They've gone now ...

(HE comes back into the room)

Shad

(Still shaken)

They killed General Dewey Haik in Chicago yesterday ... bomb right through his headquarters ... The dirty hounds! Dassn't fight like gentlemen! If I had 'em down here, I'd grab 'em by the neck and choke 'em ...

(Makes sound of choking)

Mary

(Standing stark and straight in the moonlight)

Get out of my father's house, you filthy coward, and don't ever come back here!

Mary (Cont'd.)

(SHE turns her back on him and goes up the stairs)

Shad

(Looking up after her)

Why does she treat me like that? Why does she always look down on me -

(With a hoarse, hysterical cry)

I love her!!!

Lorinda

Shad!

Shad

I always loved her and wanted her! When I was a kid sellin' her old man firewood! When she was married to that stuck-up doctor and I used to work here!

Lorinda

Shad! You've got to leave here!

Shad

(Pushing her to the door)

Get out! She can't hold out on me any longer! I love her - I love her, and I may die tomorrow! It ain't fair!

Lorinda

Shad!

(HE thrusts her outside and slams the door. She can be heard pounding on the door)

Shad! Shad!

(HE pays no attention. HE is stumbling up the stairs into the low light that shows at the head of them)

C U R T A I N

ACT 3 - SCENE 2.

(A cell in a Concentration Camp. On each side are two bunks, one above the other. The cell is low, narrow, and unlighted, except for the brilliant glare that comes from the brick-lined corridor outside, through a door -- halfway between the bunks on either side -- which is a mere screen of heavy wire, perhaps chicken-wire.

There is no furniture except a stool and a couple of galvanized iron buckets, one for water -- with a tin dipper resting in it -- and one for slops. There is no window.

At rise, the doctor, a brutal young man in "plus fours," is examining a man who lies in one of the lower bunks. This man, whom we know only as MIKE, we never see clearly. He is too ill to do more than just raise his head. But we hear his voice clearly, though it sounds as though he is weak. It is the voice of an agreeable roughneck mechanic.

Sitting on the edge of the other lower bunk is DOUGLASS JESSUP, but he is in the shadow and his head is concealed in his arms, at first, so that we do not see who he is until later, he goes to stand in the light from the door.

There are two different guards in Corpo uniform, in the scene.

At rise:

Doctor

(To Mike)

No, you don't get any medicine.

Mike

But I'm awful sick, Doc.

Doctor

If you'd shut up and quit bellyaching, you wouldn't feel so bad.

(Goes to door; shouts)

Guard!

(First Guard, a burly man in Corpo uniform, appears at door and unlocks it.... Doctor talks to him during unlocking, going out, and relocking.)

Have I got to wait up all night again?

First Guard

Naw, they'll get it over early.

Doctor

Nothing but a lot of red tape, certifying these guys dead. Hell, they're dead all right, when we get through with 'em!

(Doctor and First Guard disappear down the corridor.)

Doctor (cont'd)

(Doremus slowly rises and stands at the door.
In the brilliant light there he can now be
recognized, though he is filthy and scarred,
and in ragged shirt and trousers.)

Mike

Nice fellow, that doo!

(Doremus turns toward Mike's bunk.)

He's the one that operates on the men's eyes if they've seen
too much.

Doremus

Mike, I don't know how I can -----

(Goes to door, peers into corridor, anxiously,
to right and left.)----- take my chance and escape, and leave you to these fellows.
Why, in this year, you've become the closest friend I've ever had!

Mike

Check! Same here! I wisht I could take you just once into Gus's,
in Waterbury. Best damn mechanics in town hang out there. Them
fellows would love you!..... Say, Doremus, sure you got your
overcoat and the phony doctor's bag all ready?

Doremus

Yes, but I can't believe ----- Think of being in a place where
you can speak right out without looking back over your shoulder!
Think of having a real job waiting!..... If I do make it across
the border, to Montreal.

Mike

Doremus, you ain't practical. That's no job for you. You can't
wash dishes in a hash house!

Doremus

Am I or am I not the best cleaner of toilets in this whole camp?

Mike

Yuh, I guess that's right.

Doremus

(Looking around and lowering his voice.)
There's nobody as inconspicuous as a dish-washer. If I can
sneak back into the States -----

Mike

For God's sake don't let 'em get you, next time.

Doremus

They won't get me -- not alive.

(Goes to door, looks out nervously. He leaps
back into the cell when First Guard suddenly
appears pushing along a tall, thin, nondescript-
looking man whom we do not at first recognize as
Pastor Prang, so much likea disreputable old
tramp has he become.)

Doremus (cont'd)
 (Guard shouts in through the door, to
 Doremus, as he unlocks the door.)

Guard

(To Doremus)

Get out of the way, you bastard! I've brought you a little
 playmate.

(Doremus backs away; Guard shoves in Prang
 so violently that he falls on the floor,
 whimpering; Guard locks door again with a
 guffaw and the jeer)

Another of you intellectuals. None of you highbrows can take it!

(Exit Guard, down corridor)

(Prang has been so stooped when the guard has
 brought him in that it would be difficult to
 recognize him, and now he lies on the floor
 in the shadow. Nor is his voice -- as yet --
 recognizably the organ note of before as he
 shrieks)

Prang

It's a damn lie! I did take it! They beat me for hours, and
 I didn't tell. I did take it!

Doremus

(Hurrying to stoop over Prang)

Let me help you.

Prang

Bless you.

(Doremus helps Prang into Doremus's own bunk,
 and from it begins to pull out his own pitiable
 possessions -- an extra pair of socks, and a
 picture. Prang, lying exhausted in the bunk,
 whimpers)

But brother, this is your bunk.

Doremus

You keep it tonight. I know how you feel when they've beaten
 you.

(Pause, then his voice rises more and more into
 the shriek of prison hysteria, as -- for only a
 moment -- he loses control)

I didn't tell, either! I didn't split on anybody! They
 burned my fingers --

Guard

(Suddenly appearing in front of door)

Hey! What's all this yelling about?

Mike

Just telling some dirty stories.

Guard

You old chippy-chasers make me sick!

(Guard vanishes.)

(Prang, recovered a little, swings legs over and sits on edge of bunk; Doremus sits besides him.)

Mike

Well, they've called me about everything, but they never called me that.

Prang

(Here, as elsewhere in the scene, lost in brooding, talking more to himself than to the others, yet his voice now returning to its old-time pulpit oratory -- not too abruptly.)I denounced the sin of fornication, the sin of drunkenness, the sin of greed, and all the while I sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost -- the sin of lust for power!

Mike

Say, brother, you sound like a preacher.

Prang

I was a preacher once. My name was Prang -- Pastor Prang.

Doremus

Good Lord! Of course! Why, I heard you on the radio when you declared for Windrip!

Prang

(Throwing himself on the floor, kneeling, holding his hands imploringly to Doremus, speaking with sudden frenzy)

I have made atonement! I have been in seven prisons! I spent five months in a cell with a maniac who tried to kill me in my sleep.....But I cannot pray!

Doremus

(Patting him on the shoulder)

I know.

Mike

(Hoarsely, urgently)

Water!

(Doremus hastens to water pail for dipper of water which he holds to Mike's lips.

As he puts back dipper, Mike is muttering)

Like to show you my house. I almost got it paid for -----

Doremus

(Dragging stool to the side of Mike's bunk and sitting on it.....Prang has quietly returned to perch on edge of bunk opposite Mike's)

You try to get some sleep. I'll sit here by you.

(From here on, the words of the three men make a sort of litany.)

Prang

(Talking mostly to himself)

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept
when we remembered Zion.

Doremus

(Bent over, hands hanging between his knees)

Like to see the upland meadows again -----

Prang

How shall we sing the Lord's songs in a strange land?

Doremus

Lorinda will be there, and Mary, and David --

Mike

Like to get my hands on a great, big, long, ice-cold glass of
beer!

(Gasps, with a rattling sound, then croaks)

Doremus! Doremus! Get that doc again!

Doremus

(At door, shouting)

Guard! Guard! Guard!

Guard

(Appearing at the door, after a moment;
growling)

Whaddayuh want?

Doremus

Mike -- quick -- get the doctor!

Guard

Doctor? Hell! He's up in the Commandant's quarters, playing
bridge with some dames.

Doremus

But Mike's dying! Mike!

Guard

Then he don't need no doc!

(Exit Guard.

(Doremus and Prang stand at Mike's side, muttering
sotto voce)

Doremus

(To Mike)

It'll be all right. Hold on.

Mike

Thanks, Doremus -- I guess I'm -- passing out -----

(Silence. He is dead.)

Doremus

Now's your time to pray, pastor.

Prang

(For the first time his voice rings out with complete clearness.)

Yes! Now I can pray!.....O Lord our God, receive this, our brother -- and our intercessor.

(Tableau -- PRANG stands in the middle of the floor, clear in the light from the door, his hands uplifted, his head thrown back, his back straight again; DOREMUS with his forehead bowed against the edge of the bunk above Mike's body... Then there is, suddenly, the swift appearance at the door of the SECOND GUARD, who snaps:)

Second Guard

Jessup! I'm from Dimmick! Hustle!

(DOREMUS takes one quick look at Mike's body, yanks from under his own bunk a bundle with a long light overcoat -- which he hastily puts on -- hat and a doctor's black bag....SECOND GUARD, meanwhile, has been quickly unlocking door....PRANG stands unheeding, praying silently. SECOND GUARD shouts down corridor:)

Pete! Hey, Pete!

Distant Voice

What d' you want?

Second Guard

Passing that other doctor out.

Distant Voice

Okay.

(SECOND GUARD has re-locked door and disappeared up the corridor.

(DOREMUS looks back into the cell, and cries to PRANG:)

Doremus

The Lord keep you!

(DOREMUS swiftly disappears, following SECOND GUARD, while PRANG cries -- exultantly, triumphantly:)

Prang

The Lord bless and keep thee. The Lord of Freedom guide thy feet in all their perilous ways until we shall both come at last unto His Kingdom!

(His voice quivers, his head droops, and tears are coming to his eyes as he stands there, again lonely in a silent cell.)

In Jesus' name. Amen.

CURTAIN

ACT III - SCENE III

TIME: Same night as Scene II.

The inner room of a Corpo immigration post on the Canadian border. It is a dingy little room. On the wall is a smudged government-printed placard headed: INSTRUCTIONS TO U.S. IMMIGRATION OFFICERS. There is a desk, a bench, and an old-fashioned, pot-bellied stove. Against one wall is a small gun rack containing a row of cavalry carbines. The rack is locked with a padlock. Behind the desk is a young, rather worried-looking immigration officer. At the door is a Corpo private. We note that the time and the war have taken much of the snap out of the Corpo uniforms. Neither of the men wear long trousers. The officerx wear leather puttees and the private wears blue wrap-leggings. Their red coats are faded and plain bronz has replaced the glittering brass buttons.

Officer

Awright, I'll see her ... why don't they close this GOd-forsaken border?

Private

It's been closed pretty tight.

(He turns to open the door)

Officer

Don't be so damned cheerful.

(The private gestures to someone in the outer room and goes to attend to the stove.)

(MARY and DAVID come in. DAVID is wearing a raincoat.)

Officer

Sit down! What's your name?

Mary

Marie Jackson ... This is my son, Donald.

(Private goes out)

Officer

Your home?

Mary

New York City.

Officer

Your passport?

Mary

Here!

(She walks over and lays it on the desk before him and lays her purse beside it)

Officer

(Picking it up and squinting at it under his desk lamp)

Let's have a look at it ... under the light. We've been getting a lot of phonies lately.

(He looks at it a moment, then throws it down on the desk with disgust)

Nuts. How do I know whether it's phony? Walt Trowbridge's spies are gettin' so they make 'em better than we do.

Mary

I assure you it's genuine.

Officer

Why do you want to go to Canada?

Mary

To make a living. I have relatives in Montreal. They promised to find me a job.

Officer

Isn't there anything left for you to do in this country?

(PRIVATE swings open the door)

Private

T'shun!

Officer

(Jumps to his feet)

(SWAN strides through the door. He wears a leather coat with a fur collar. His manner is brusque and rather worried. He has no time for the sophisticated small talk he was so proud of when we last saw him)

Swan

Who's in command here?

Officer

(Snapping into the Corpo salute)

I am, sir! Lieutenant Poabody!

Swan

(Returning the salute and slurring it)

I'm District Commissioner Swan ... I have a convoy outside. Seen anything of that gasoline?

Officer

Gasoline?

Swan

(Nasty)

Yes! Not milk or perfume! I'm down to buying it from the Canadians ...

Officer

I haven't been advised of any gasoline, sir!

Swan

My God! Why haven't you! Our beautiful Military System!
(Explains)

We're cut off. The rebel air raids have wrecked the railroads.
If I don't get forty trucks across the border, there won't be a
Corpo plane in the air in New England.

(Notices Mary for the first time. His voice
grows suspicious)

Who's this woman?

Officer

Nobody, sir!

(To Mary)

Get outa here, you! I haven't time for passports.

Swan

(Sharply)

Wait a minute!

(She stops. He studies her for a long moment.

Continues his keen scrutiny)

I've seen you somewhere.

Mary

I don't think so!

Swan

Where are you from?

Mary

New York.

Swan

Sit down.

Mary

(Trying to be calm)

Donald dear, take off your coat. It's so warm.

(DAVID is unhooding) (Sharply)

Donald!

David

Yes, mother.

Mary

Take off your coat, dear.

(DAVID takes it off. He still wears a Corpo
uniform)

Officer
(Rather obsequiously)
At any rate, the kid's all right! He's in uniform.

Swan
That don't prove they're loyal ...
(To DAVID)
Did you ever drill, son? With the Boys' Battalion?

Mary
(Hastily)
He's not been very well.

David
Yes sir! I've drilled.

Swan
Where?

David
New York, sir!

Swan
You wouldn't lie to me?

David
(His eyes wavering toward his mother)
No, sir!

Swan
(Turning to the officer)
Give me one of those carbines.

Officer
(Getting up and going to the gun-rack)
Yes, sir!
(The officer unlocks the case and takes out
a carbine.)
It's loaded, sir - on safety.

Swan
(Snatches it from him in the approved military
manner. He snaps the bolt, making sure the gun
is loaded and on safety)

Here, you!
(He turns to DAVID and throws the gun to him with
considerable force. The boy catches it at the
right balance as could be done only by a boy who
has had military training)

Officer
Pretty good. He caught it well, sir!

Swan

(Standing in front of David)

Quarterm arms!
(DAVID does so)

Right shoulder arms!
(DAVID does so)

Port arms!
(DAVID does so)

Present arms!
(DAVID does so)

Quarter arms!
(DAVID does so)

Parade rest!
(DAVID does so)
(With approval)

Very fair. Sloppy on the quarter, but on the whole, very good!
Who trained you?

David

The Captain!

Swan

Captain who?

David

(His eyes once more wandering toward his mother)

I don't remember his name, sir!

Swan

That's bad. Stand at attention!
(DAVID does so. To MARY)

And you! Maybe you don't remember the name of Captain Leduc!

Mary

I never heard of him.

Swan

(Not quite sure)

I've seen you somewhere! Have you ever been in Boston?

Mary

No, sir! Well ... yes ... I was there once for a few days -- only ...

Swan

Ever hear of a place called Ft. Boulah? ... never heard ...
And you never heard of Leduc?

Mary

No!

Swan

Captain Shad Leduc of Ft. Boulah?

Mary

No, sir!

Swan

You don't remember how he looked, lying on the floor with his throat torn open by a pair of scissors?

Mary

No, sir!

Swan

Let me see your hands!

(She holds them out)

You've done hard work, I guess! You might have been a laundress or a seamstress.

(Turns to DAVID)

At ease!

(DAVID takes the position)

Do you know anything about it, son? You're a good Corpo! You know it is your duty to report a murderer - even if it's your mother.

David

(After a moment)

I know sir - It is right and glorious to kill for the service of one's country without regard for friendship or ties of kin.

(Runs it all together)

Swan

Mmmmm! I can see you've learned Buzz Windrip's Youth Manual.

(From outside comes the sound of motor horns. The door is flung open by private JULIAN FALCK, in uniform as Corpo Lieutenant with leather motoring jacket. He no longer looks callow, but hard and resolute. When MARY and he see each other, they do not startle nor otherwise betray themselves -- since they are now trained conspirators -- but ignore each other after the briefest glance.

Meanwhile:)

Julian

Gasoline transport is here, sir.

Swan

Very well. Tell 'em to stop their racket. Secret movement.

Julian

Very well, sir.

(Turns to go.)

Swan

Wait a minute. You come from Fort Boulah -----

(Indicates MARY)

Ever see this woman before?

Julian

Nos'r.

Swan

You sure? God help you if you make any mistake!

(Insolently, JULIAN looks MARY and DAVID -- who is clenching his fists in nervous anxiety -- all over and says colorlessly, almost contemptuously:)

Julian

Never saw the woman or the brat in my life, sir, far's I know.

Swan

All right.

(JULIAN abruptly exits.)

(Turns to officer. PRIVATE closes the door.)

Got out there! Clear them across the line! Make it snappy!

Officer

(At the door)

What about her, sir?

Swan

(Spreads papers on the desk)

Oh, let her go ... We haven't time for red tape ... anyway, Leduc was a bore and an oaf.

(He turns to look at Mary, goes on to justify his decision)

This isn't the woman ... I saw her once ... she was smarter ... and her voice was different.

Officer

(To MARY)

You're in luck ...

Swan

(Bent over paper)

Go on.

(To OFFICER)

Wait. Keep the boy. He's got the makings of a soldier.

(OFFICER goes.)

Mary

Come here, son.

(DAVID comes to her. Suddenly she draws him to her in a passionate embrace. Then, quietly, she takes the gun from him)

Go on, dear, outside.

(DAVID goes. SWAN turns and sees MARY sitting with the carbine trained on him)

Swan

Put down that gun.

Mary

(Quietly)

Walk away from your desk, Commissioner Swan.

Swan

I'll let you go - I okayed your passport -- Mrs. Greenhill!

Mary

I won't need it now.

Swan

Think of your son!

Mary

Go to the door, Commissioner Swan.
(SWAN does so)

Order the guard to pass the boy across the border. Have them send him in first.

Swan

Just drop the melodrama and you can both go.

Mary

Give the order.

Swan

(To the guard outside)

Corporal, pass the boy across the border. And send him in first..

(DAVID comes in)

Mary

Shut the door, David.

(DAVID does so. He sees his Mother with the gun and starts to give a cry)

David, you're going across the border. Take my purse off the desk.

(He does so)

Walk to the railroad station. Don't talk to anyone. Take a train to Montreal. Go to the People's Party headquarters and ask for your grandfather.

(SWAN starts)

Oh, yes, Commissioner Swan, my father has escaped.

(To DAVID)

Grandfather and Aunt Lindy - they'll be in Montreal waiting - they'll take care of you.

David

(Terrified)

But aren't you coming, Mother?

Mary

When I can.

(To SWAN)

Don't start toward that desk, Commissioner. I'm a good duck shot.

(To DAVID)

Until I come, Grandfather and Aunt Lindy will take care of you, and you've got to take care of them. Try to remember everything your grandfather ever said or did. Don't try to understand - just say to yourself - I'm Doromus Jossup's grandson.

David

Oh, Mother!

(He starts toward her, but she keeps the gun trained on SWAN)

Mary

Go dear - and remembor everthing -- remembor America.

David

I'll remembor.

(DAVID goes)

Mary

Now, Commissioner Swan - I am thinking of my son - and I'm thinking of his father.

Swan

Then get it over with. Hurry up.

Mary

I'm not going to hurry. I'm going to give you the chance to remember. When that door opens, I shall kill you.

(SWAN looks apprehensively toward door.)

Look at me, Commissioner Swan!

(The door is beginning to open)

Swan

I knew I should have killed Jossup.

Mary

You couldn't! Doromus Jessup can never die.

(The door slowly begins to open)

C U R T A I N

"IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE"

Music CUE Sheet.

ACT 1

SCENE 1 ----- CURTAIN UP	..... IDYL
CURTAIN DOWN	..... AMERICA
SCENE 11 ----- CURTAIN UP	..... PARK BAND (Stars & Stripes)
CURTAIN DOWN	..... PARADE (Backstage)
CURTAIN DOWN	..... Scream-SARDONIC CORPO (SPIRIT OF '76)
SCENE 111 ----- CURTAIN UP	..... No Music
CURTAIN DOWN	..... PARADE (Backstage)
CURTAIN DOWN	..... TELEPHONE MUSIC
SCENE 1V ----- SEGUE into	..... Segue - RELIGIOSO - CHORDS
CURTAIN DOWN	..... Then piano RELIGIOSO at <u>cue</u> "God Sees It" out--
CURTAIN DOWN	..... RADIO MUSIC
SCENE V ----- CURTAIN UP into	..... RADIO MUSIC (Listening)
CURTAIN DOWN	..... Dramatic into STAGE BAND MEDLEY going into
SCENE VI ----- CURTAIN UP	..... Same Curtain down SCENE V
CURTAIN DOWN	..... No music.
	ACT 11
SCENE 1 ----- CURTAIN UP	..... No music
CURTAIN DOWN	..... No music
SCENE 11 ----- CURTAIN UP	..... No music
CURTAIN DOWN	..... Ominous Andante
SCENE 111 ----- CURTAIN UP	..... CHOPIN
	..... Whistling -- Hymns on stage, orchestra picks up hymn for scene change - then CONSPIRACY MUSIC
SCENE 1 V ----- No Curtain down on act.	

ACT III

SCENE 1 ----- No curtain up

CURTAIN DOWN DRAMATIC then PLODDING into

SCENE 11 -----

CURTAIN DOWN ACTION and DRAMATIC MUSIC

SCENE 111 ----- No music on curtain down

All the above listed cue Music on and off stage was composed by Han Bruno Meyer for this production.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED MUSIC

AMERICAN FANTASIA by Victor Herbert - Carl Fischer, Inc.

CHOPINIANNIA Hosmer - Carl Fischer, Inc.

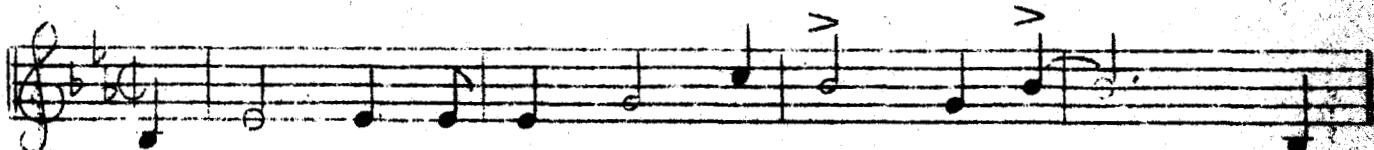
SEMPER FIDELIS Sousa - Carl Fischer, Inc.

EVOLUTION OF YANKEE DOODLE - Lake - Carl Fischer, Inc.

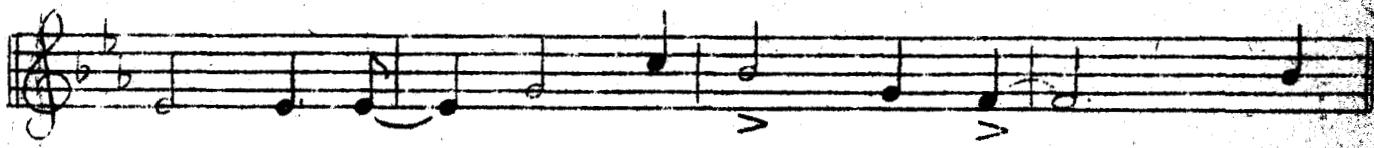
THE CORPO MARCH
Production: "It Can't Happen Here"

Music by
Hans Bruno Meyer

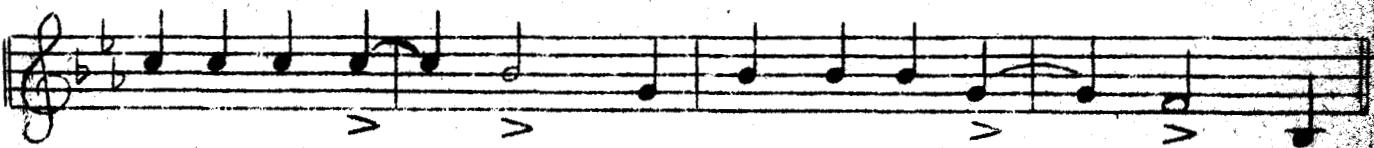
Words by
Sinclair Lewis



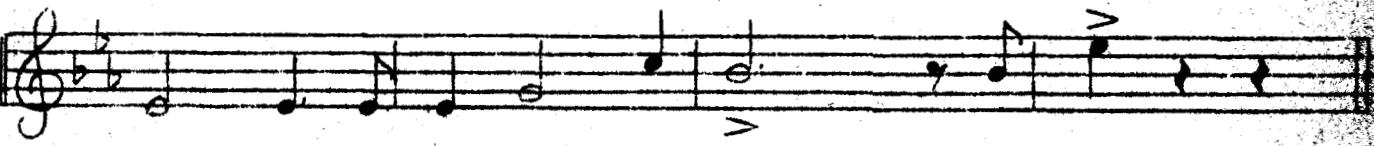
The Cor- pos are com-ing, hurrah, hurrah! The
The Cor- pos are com-ing, hurrah, hurrah! The



Cor- pos are com-ing Hurrah, Hurrah!---- A---
Cor- pos are com-ing hurrah, hurrah!---- The
Cor- pos are com-ing hurrah, hurrah!---- The
Cor- pos are com-ing hurrah, hurrah!---- The
Cor- pos are com-ing hurrah, hurrah!---- The



merica's flag is nailed up on the moon-- and The
Corpos are com---ing to cap-ture Fort Beau---lah. The
Corpos are com---ing to cap-ture New Eng----land. The
Corpos will cap---ture the votes of Chi-ca----go. The
Corpos will eat all the beans up in Bos----ton. The



Cor---pos are com-ing, Hurrah, Hurrah!
Cor---pos are com-ing, Hurrah, Hurrah!